

Bro. E. Burr

SCRIPTURAL TITHING

AND

NEW TESTAMENT
CHURCH GOVERNMENT

by Murray E. Burr

THE FATHER OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT WROTE - - -

We do not believe the Bible to teach, or that God ever intended Christians to be taxed for the support of salaried preachers, but that the workman is worthy of his hire, and without having a stipulated salary every true minister called of God would receive exactly what he is worth. This would cut out the modern useless professional ministry.

We believe that every Christian robs God when he does not give a tenth of his income to the full gospel, God called, consecrated ministry. The tenth was not intended for indigent relatives or other benevolent purposes, but was for the priest-hood, who had no other employment; who did not only serve on the Sabbath but continuously. (A Voice Crying in the Wilderness - Page 66. Written in January, 1902.)

By Charles F. Parham
Founder of the College of Bethel
Topeka, Kansas

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To a Good Friend,
Rev. S. E. Eley.

Murray E. Burr

"FOREWORD"

I believe in the concept of constructive Religious Organization. My entire ministry has been spent in the confines of an Organization. Organization has been good to me. Thus far Organization has never bound me or held me back from obeying God. I will state without hesitation that what I could have done outside Organization I have been able to do better inside Organization. I owe a great debt of gratitude to our Organization and to the many precious Brethren who make up its constituency. I had rather die today, than ever bring reproach upon this body, or to fail them in this crucial hour of history.

Yet, and I must say this to be true to the Christ that bought me and called me to preach the Gospel—"MY FIRST ALLEGIANCE MUST ALWAYS BE TO GOD." It was God who convicted and saved me; it was God who spoke peace to my troubled sin-sick soul; it is for God and Him alone that I must speak. This is an intimate, personal relationship between a preacher and his God, in which there can be no intermediary or go-between. Therefore to keep this relationship stainless, I cannot place party above principle, or human associations above Him who called me.

Religious Organization is an association of people of like precious faith. A made-by-man vehicle to promote fellowship and to better facilitate the command of our Lord to "GO YE". God regards human engineered Organization mainly because he regards the men and women who make up its constituency. If a people be watchful and wise, organization can be health to their bones. If they become careless and foolish and more interested in the rewards of organization and the spoils of office than promoting the Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, Organization can easily become a tyrant, A FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER THAT WILL SHACKLE THEM AND DRIVE GOD FROM THEIR MIDST. If there is any doubt in the reader's mind let him look at the religious denominations around him.

Like any worthwhile piece of machinery, Organization can be misused to the detriment of those who made it. Thus instead of serving its constituency and the cause of Christ in general, the very purpose for its existence becomes perverted, and the people who make up its membership are forced into becoming slaves to a system. This is especially true when men lose the spirit of God and regard office and salary and position and power and prestige as coveted stakes as they do in a secular form of democratic government.

From the information that I have accumulated down through the years, it seems that the founding fathers of the Pentecostal Movement operated under the time proven theory — "THAT THE LEAST POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT IS THE BEST GOVERNMENT". Meeting prayerfully together they formulated only such standards of

conduct and doctrine as were needed to maintain a healthy fellowship. Thus the ministry enjoyed great latitude of operation and great freedom of expression. They shunned with horror any thought of placing restrictive hands on the move of God. They rejected everything that would be binding or galling to the ministry. They were careful to steer clear of a stereotyped ministry — that is, the effort to place everyone into a carnal faceless mold as some seem to advocate today. The individuality of the ministry was jealously guarded. Ministers were mainly honored as they honored God and manifested God's anointing on their lives. Our early founding fathers recognized that the operation of the Holy Ghost could never be restricted to any single pattern.

The two prerogatives that were religiously guarded above all others by the early ministry were as follows:

(1) — That each assembly should be locally owned and locally governed under the headship of its Bishop or Pastor. Our early founding fathers believed in the Sovereignty of the Local Church, and deeply resented outside interference.

(2) — That the "TITHE" was the inheritance of the Priesthood and should be handled only by the ministry.

If I were called upon to pin-point the one reason above all others for the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal Movement, I would unhesitatingly attribute it to a free and unfettered ministry whose consuming passion was to fully obey God in every way. God will always honor and bless and crown with success the ministry of any man who will wholly surrender and preach His word without fear or favor. While on the other hand a **FEARFUL, FRIGHTENED, INTIMIDATED, MUZZLED, AND STEROTYPED MINISTRY CAN BUT INVITE THE CURSE OF GOD, AND THE BLIGHT OF MEDIOCRITY.**

But a new day has dawned; a new era has rolled around. And with this new era a growing alarm among our ministers that the God ordained power and authority of the Pentecostal ministry is being steadily undermined. It is this writer's studied opinion that unless the Pentecostal ministry awakens to the danger and exercises an extra-ordinary courage and concern, the day can easily dawn when they will become a shackled, salaried, subdued, and sullied ministry, by-passed by the Holy Ghost and scornfully manipulated by carnal powers as faceless pawns in a game of religious chess.

When the Constitution of the United States was framed, astute men, students of history, and keenly aware of hidden dangers that in the past had destroyed other democratic systems, wisely installed certain checks and balances in the power structure of the national government. Also into this historic document they wrote certain safe-guards of individual liberty and freedom — namely the

"BILL-OF-RIGHTS". This bill of rights guaranteed freedom of speech and press; Laws against illegal entry and search etc. They recognized that a Democratic system without these safeguards can easily fall victim to that hated scourge — "DICTATORSHIP". In fact Democracy without such safe-guards is susceptible to Dictatorship. Therefore where the preservation of liberty and freedom was the sole objective of the founding fathers, oppression and tyranny could usurp and reign supreme.

It would be well that we seriously consider the questions that are being asked more and more by our Pentecostal ministers.

Have we included the necessary checks and balances in our governmental set-up?

Do we have a clearly defined, concise and spelled our "Bill-of-Rights"? Are we guaranteed freedom of speech and freedom to write?

Have we provided a place for self-analysis?

Will we tolerate constructive criticism?

Does the man who undertakes to write a penetrating analysis of the trends and spirits and dangers confronting this movement endanger his ministry and reputation and fellowship to do so?

I do not offer these questions in an effort to criticize. Neither am I seeking to indict either a system or an individual. These questions transcend personalities. If our movement is to be preserved, these are questions that sooner or later will have to be answered satisfactorily.

Over-Centralization of Government and power, the scourge of any democratic system, is a creeping thing. Its menacing shadow is looming greater and greater over our Pentecostal horizon. Step by cautious step it stalks its victim. It is a rare occurrence for liberty to be lost instantaneously or as a complete whole. It is normally lost through an undermining here and a chipping away there; A word changed; A clause added; A sentence rephrased and that bit by bit perhaps over a period of many years. Then one day we awake and realize that we have given away precious freedom piece-meal. It is one of the proven lessons of history that lost freedoms are seldom if ever regained.

I am going to make a broad statement and no doubt it will be challenged. Get down to the grass-roots and analyze any unrest, disunity or dissension in our ranks of recent years. It has not necessarily been over doctrine. We have learned to live in harmony and still maintain certain divergent views doctrinally. It has not altogether been over holiness, although certain trends have caused alarm. Tracing most unrest to its source, invariably the blame can be fixed squarely on the move toward Over-Centralization of Power

and Government, with the subsequent diminishing of the authority of the ministry and the freedom of the local church.

Fish caught in a net are not too alarmed while the net is out at sea. But let the lines begin to be tightened; Diminish their freedom of movement; Let them begin to feel the pressure of unseen forces closing in on them and alarm spreads.

In presenting this work, I have scrupulously sought to avoid striking at personalities and to deal solely with issues; although issues and personalities are sometimes closely interwoven. Neither do I seek to indict individuals or systems. I have prayerfully sought to expose trends and spirits and drifts and influences, though perhaps presenting only minor danger today, could in years to come be extremely hazardous. Many of the subjects that I have covered are not original with me. I am but expressing the convictions the beliefs the fears the apprehensions and misgivings that are disturbing, in some instances, large segments of our fellowship. The reader will note that the central theme of this work is "MINISTERIAL FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY". If our fellowship is to be preserved, and a bride is to be made ready for the Lord's soon coming, only a free and unfettered ministry can accomplish that monumental task.

CHAPTER I

"TITHING AND NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GOVERNMENT"

I am not promoting a new revelation. Neither are the facts set forth in this discourse a radical departure from any accepted teaching of our Jesus Name Pentecostal Movement. I call upon every man or woman of age and experience, who are acquainted with the beliefs and practices of earlier Pentecost to witness that what is set forth in this booklet, is merely a reaffirmation of a doctrine and practice that was generally accepted by our Pentecostal Ministry only a decade or so ago. Those stalwart pioneers of our Pentecostal Heritage held strong convictions along these lines. It is comforting to know that even today the consensus of a large segment of our Pentecostal Ministry solidly supports the truth contained in this treatise.

The Book of Revelation sets forth the two extremes of Church Government as practiced in the religious world today. Revelation 2:6 depicts the "**DEEDS OF THE NICAOLAITANES**",* which defined is nothing more than the Episcopal System of Religious Hierarchy as employed by the Methodist and Roman Catholic churches. A graduated ministerial system of Pastors over Pastors, Bishops, Arch-Bishops, Cardinals and Pope. Naturally this system is more pronounced in the Papal Church than in the Methodist Church. One will note the progressive nature of this evil practice, which God says he hates. What was a doctrine in the church at Pergamos (Rev. 2:15) had become deeds in the Church at Ephesus. (Rev. 2:6)

The other extreme is that practiced by the "**CHURCH OF LAODICEA**", in Rev. 3:14. Laodicea is the church of the end-time and will be existing at the time of the coming of the Lord. The word "**LAODICEA**" means "Justice of the People", or "**RULE BY THE LAYMEMBERS**". The Latin phrase for it is, "**VOX-POPULI VOX-DEI**" or "The voice of the people is the voice of God."

Somewhere in between these two is God's true system of Church Government, which briefly stated consist of nothing more nor less than "**SOVEREIGN LOCAL CHURCHES UNDER THE HEADSHIP OF THEIR BISHOP OR PASTOR**". Incidentally I can find no higher office of an executive nature in the New Testament Church than that of the Bishop which means Pastor.

The drift of our Pentecostal Movement is quite obvious to discerning eyes. The local churches are steadily drifting toward the Laodicean system of rule by the laity, while the organizational superstructure is drifting toward "**OVER-CENTRALIZATION**" of government and power which inevitably tends toward hierarchy. We have not yet arrived, thanks be to God, but we are on our way.

* **NICAOLAITANISM** Means — Exalted Clergy.

Doubtless I will be branded an alarmist and a wwitch-hunter for making such a statement.

Others apart from our movement can see this trend much more clearly than we. They can likewise read certain danger signals which we do not discern. This is true because they are more versed in this system than we. For example, a prominent Trinitarian author, writing on the various organizations inside the Pentecostal Camp, commented quite pointedly and with marked surprise on the highly centralized government of the Jesus Name Movement. Also a well known trial judge in deep east Texas, who presided over a law suit between two factions of one of our Pentecostal churches, called attention to the striking parallel and close kin-ship between the Methodist System of Church Government and that of our Pentecostal Movement. Being a Methodist he quickly detected the closeness of the two systems. Being an attorney he understood its legal ramifications.

It is doubtless superfluous for me to point out that the victim of such trends will be the "**PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY**". Religious Hierarchy coupled with the Laodicean system presents an unhallowed combination of awesome proportions; A double-jawed nut-cracker that can crush the life and freedom out of the Spirit-filled ministry.

We have those in our ranks who advocate the Methodist System of Church Government. They preach of its glories; they boast of its vaunted efficiency and effectiveness. They urge us to adopt its policies. But what is the Methodist System? It is exactly what I have described in the preceeding paragraph — "**A COMBINATION OF RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY AND LAODICEA** (Laity Rule)". A strong General Over-Seer, complimented by strong and well entrenched local Church Boards; The two working together in a kind of "**YOU SCRATCH MY BACK I'LL SCRATCH YOURS ARRANGEMENT**". And where does this leave the beleagured minister, especially the Pastor? Stripped of his God-given liberty and authority, his hands tightly bound and his mouth gagged, he ends up as "**THE NUT IN THE NUT-CRACKER**". With his will broken, his freedom under God to speak as the spirit directs prostituted, his spirit and his spirituality ruthlessly crushed out of him, he degenerates into an ecclesiastical robot, mouthing prescribed phrases and party-line cliches: A thing scorned of the Devil, pitied by Gods true prophets and discarded by heaven.

"But how", the reader may ask, "does the mere question of paying tithes co-incide with New Testament Church Government"? If the trend toward Overcentralization and Laity rule gains momentum, a salaried ministry will inevitably become the order of the day. An old Communist doctrine is. "**That he who pays is boss**". Religious hierarchy and Laodicea both emphatically agree that if

the ministry is to be a "CONTROLLED MINISTRY THEN IT MUST OF NECESSITY BE A SALARIED MINISTRY". A free ministry operating under the Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost destroys both these systems root and branch. Therefore scriptural tithing for all practical purposes tends to disembowel both Over-centralization and Laodicea.

For example, both the voice and spirit of Laodicea can be detected in such statements as, "We hire our preachers; We tell our preachers what they must do; We pay our preachers what we want them to have; We fire our preachers". Such a spirit is so calloused and carnal. It is altogether foreign to the word and will of God. An assembly who seeks the mind and will of God and is fortunate enough to get God's man does not hire their Pastor. On the contrary, **GOD GIVES TO THEM THEIR PASTOR AS A GIFT**. If they are close enough to God to recognize his will they unanimously sanction His actions and thankfully accepts the man whom He sends.

Ephesians 4:11 clearly bears out the truth of this statement — Quote: "And He gave some Apostles; and some Prophets; and some Evangelist; and some Pastors and Teachers".

Schofield in his foot-notes makes this very timely and appropriate observation and I quote "In 1 Cor. 12:8-28 the Spirit is seen as enabling the members of the body of Christ with Spiritual Gifts; Here certain Spirit-endued men are themselves the gifts whom the glorified Christ bestows upon His body the Church. In Corinthians the gifts are spiritual enablements for specific services; IN EPHESIANS THE GIFTS ARE MEN".

God never intended His Church be staffed with "**MAIL-ORDER-PASTORS**". What is a "**MAIL-ORDER-PASTOR**"? They come in assorted sizes, shapes and especially prices. None of them are Custom or Tailor-made — all are standardized hand-me-downs. Permit me to illustrate:

The Chairman of the pulpit committee calls up the General Over-seer (Bishop) and says, "We need such and such type Preacher. He must not be too old, good personality, good mixer, diplomatic, flexible, no pronounced convictions that could embarrass our sophisticated audience, a team-man, one who will indulgently smile on a little normal dissipation, must appeal to our young people, and most of all he must be safe.

Back comes the Bishop's voice, cultured, cool, non-committal. "H'mm — let me see. Your church is in the Class "A" category is it not? We have just the man for you. Class "A" men only go to Class "A" churches you know. Our Class "A" men are in the \$10,000 a year bracket. Had you needed a Class "B" man we could let him go for eight. While our Class "C" men? — Forgive me, I'm sure that you would not be interested in that type; We usually assign

all Class "C" men to the rural areas. I'll send you this man and if after a few months he doesn't pan out, let me know, for we have others you can choose from."

With the cold-blooded efficiency of a well oiled machine, the agreement is made, the bargain is struck and without the formality of even the briefest of prayers, a voiceless, spineless, spiritless piece of ecclesiastical merchandize is packaged, sealed and assigned for immediate delivery.

Imagine if you will, what would happen to a man, laboring under such conditions, if he sought to root out sin, or raise up a standard of decency or holiness, or attempted to exercise even a semblance of discipline over such a church. He is a hireling and he knows it. The people know he is a hireling; The church Board payed for him, so they know he is a hireling; The Bishop sold him, so he knows he is a hireling. This is a classic example of "**NICAOLAITANISM**" and "**LAODICEA**" at work. This is the Methodist System that some are advocating that we adopt. If the reader thinks I am dealing in fantasies, let him ask the men who have crossed swords with this spirit.

Let the awful truth of this little expose penetrate clearly the mind and thinking of spirit-filled christians, and the utter sinfulness, the guilt and presumption of both the Laodician and Hierarchy systems loom up in their true and horrible proportions. One need not marvel that of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, Laodicea alone, received no single word of praise or commendation from the Lord; But only dire and fearful pronouncements of judgement. Neither should it amaze us because God said, "**I HATE THE DEEDS OF THE NICAOLAITANES.**" The Deeds of the Nicaolaitanes destroyed the early New Testament Church and brought on this world the curse of Papacy.

Always bear in mind that it is God who hires the preacher; And God has made provisions whereby He (not the church) pays the preacher. God asks no man to labor free of charge (I Cor. 9:7). He provides for the support of His ministry in such a way that **HIS MINISTRY IS AT ALL TIMES FREE AND UNFETTERED**. When the Prophet of God stands in the Tower of the Flock to break the sacred bread of life, all human relationships that would bind or hinder him must be severed. He becomes God's man and God's mouth-piece with no earthly strings attached. Drawing the spiritual robes of Priest-hood about him, he retires within the sacred citadel of God's Holy Anointing where no other human being dares follow. Better that you touch the Ark of the Covenant as did Uzzah of old and have your life taken from the earth than to touch or seek to pervert God's anointed today.

A Pastor's responsibility is awesome and his authority is great. The seven Angels (Pastors) of the seven churches of Asia are

depicted as seven individual stars, each held separately and distinct in the right hand of Almighty God. The seven churches over which God made them Overseer or Bishop, were depicted as seven distinct and separate Lamp-stands. The Golden Candle-stick in the Old Tabernacle had one main trunk or stand with seven branches. Here each church is pictured as a separate and distinct Lamp-stand, **SHOWING THAT EACH WAS SOVEREIGN UNDER GOD**. Each Star (Pastor) was controlled and unctionized separately by God; Each was held individually responsible by God for their separate churches. The double scourge of the New Testament Church, the Laodicean and Hierarchy systems, would make the Pastor only a minor actor in the Drama of the Church, **BUT GOD HAS MADE HIM THE STAR**. They would make him the tail of an unscriptural graduated colossus, but God has made him the head. Hierarchy would make the local church only a branch in a giant system, but God has made it an individual Lamp-stand.

Therefore when a local Assembly is truly a certified New Testament Church and they move in accordance with God's Divine will, they do not hire their Pastor; they do not pay their Pastor; And how can they fire one whom they did not hire.

Here is the answer to the riddle. Here is how Christ provides for His ministers. This is the scriptural plan. This is the plan that is despised by both Religious Hierarchy and Laodicea. This is the plan they have vowed to destroy; Because neither will be safe as long as it is functioning. This is also the plan that our Pentecostal Movement held unerringly to up until a decade or so ago. This is the plan to which we must return if we do not wish to come under the yoke of these false systems. Out of all that is produced out of the Earth God created and sustains, **HE HAS RESERVED TEN PERCENT FOR HIMSELF**. The remaining 90 percent he graciously releases to man for his labors after man has first rendered the ten percent to Him. Christ as High-Priest is commissioned to collect the ten percent or "**TITHE**" from those who voluntarily want to become co-workers with Him. In Abraham's day he collected the "**TITHE**" in or through the person of Melchisedec. Today and since his ascension, as High-Priest he has authorized His servants whom he has chosen as His ministers (Pastors) to receive the "**TENTH**" or "**TITHE**" for Him from the flock overwhich the Holy Ghost has made them Bishop or Overseer. The "**TITHE**" becomes their remuneration or financial support for their work in the ministry.

CHAPTER 2

"ERRORS, MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS"

Probably no other doctrine in modern religion is surrounded by a greater cloud of myths, errors and misconceptions than that of paying tithes. For many years the Pentecostal Movement stayed relatively free from such false teachings. But in the last quarter century, the leaven of the Laodicean and Nicaolaitane systems have crept in, until today error is wide-spread. To illustrate, permit me to list some of the most common errors and misconceptions in our Movement today.

- (1) — Tithing originated under the Law of Moses.
- (2) — Tithing was strictly Jewish.
- (3) — Tithing was a national tax levied on the Jews.
- (4) — The New Testament does not teach tithes.
- (5) — The Necessity of paying tithes ceased with Christ's crucifixion.
- (6) — There were several tithes in the Old-Testament, hence it is impossible to formulate anything clear-cut for today.
- (7) — I do not believe in giving just the tenth; I believe in giving all to God.
- (8) — God ordained tithing to finance the general church program.
- (9) These are my tithes. I have a right to know how my tithes are spent.
- (10) — Tithes should go into the local church treasury. The church should control the tithes. Out of this treasury the Pastor will be paid a salary. New construction can be financed. Repairs, utility bills and general operating expense can be paid.
- (11) — Tithes should be used to feed the widows and orphans and the down and out.
- (12) — All tithes should be collected and sent to the Organizational Headquarters to be dispensed as they see fit. Thus all the ministry would receive an equal amount, paid each month by the Denominational Headquarters.

We shall not at this time comment on the absurdity of these twelve propositions. In due course, each will be dealt with in this discourse on tithing.

CHAPTER 3

"A BRIEF HISTORY OF TITHES"

The word "**TITHE**" comes from the Hebrew word "**MAASRAH**" and means the "**TENTH PART**". According to Strong's Concordance it is mentioned in its various forms 39 times in both the Old and New Testaments. The word "**TENTH**" as relating to tithes is mentioned 6 times in both the Old and New Testaments.

Tithing in type can be traced clear back to the Garden of Eden. God created all the trees of the garden and gave them to man for his support and enjoyment with the exception of one. He reserved to Himself the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This tree He commanded man not to touch on the penalty of death.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and Abel the firstlings (reserved part of first portion) of his flock as an offering to the Lord (Genesis 4)

In Genesis 14:20 Melchisedec met Abram (Abraham) returning from the slaughter of the Kings and blessed him, serving him bread and wine. (Elements of the sacrament under the New Covenant). In turn Abraham "**GAVE HIM TITHES OF ALL**".

The Bible leaves no record of Isaac, Abraham's son paying tithes; but it is only logical to conclude that he did, inasmuch as God renews with Isaac, the covenant he made with Abraham.

Genesis chapter 28 tells the story of Jacob fleeing from his brother Essau. Tarrying all night at Bethel (house of God) Jacob received his first revelation of God. So overwhelmed was he by the vision that he makes his first consecration to God in the form of a vow. He promised that out of all that God would give him all the days of his life, **HE WOULD GIVE BACK THE TITHE OR TENTH TO GOD.**

Israel under Moses Law was required to pay at least two tithes and perhaps three. (those who grumble at paying one tithe please note)

(1) --- The first tithe became the Levite's inheritance and as such could not be touched by any out-sider. Note Numbers 19:21 - "**And behold I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the services of the tabernacle of the congregation**".

From this tithe the Levites tithed a tenth to the High Priest.

(2) — The second tithe was dedicated to festival purposes (Duet. 14:22) In the place where God would choose to place His Name, later Jerusalem and the Temple, they were to bring the tithe of their corn and wine and oil and the firstlings of their flocks and eat there before the Lord and rejoice. If the distance was too great to conveniently transport all this produce, then it could

be converted into money and everything needful for the festival purchased when they arrived at the site of the festival.

(3) — The third tithe was as follows: Every third year, either the festival tithe or a third tithe was to be eaten in company with the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. (Deut. 14:29)

One will note that the **FIRST TITHE WAS THE TRUE TITHE OR GOD'S TENTH**, the other two were to be used and enjoyed by the individual.

Nehemiah Chapter 13 records an interesting side-light to the history of tithing. Temple worship had fallen into ill repute. Tobiah the Ammonite, an enemy of the Jew and a stranger and an outsider had installed himself in the tithe chamber of the temple. Eliashib the High Priest, allied with Tobiah, had not only permitted him to do so but had prepared the chamber for him. The Levites to whom the tithe belonged were being deprived of their rightful inheritance and had consequently forsaken the service of the Temple. Nehemiah, upon hearing of this violation of God's law, became exceedingly grieved and cast forth Tobiah's household stuff out of the Tithe Chamber. Cleansing the chamber, he once again urged the Israelites to bring in the tithes and the Levites were abundantly supplied.

We mention this as a reminder that there are many Tobiahs in the Pentecostal Movement today, whose stuff (doctrines and practices) must be cast forth out of the tithe chamber. They are foreigners and strangers to our message, and have neither part nor lot in our Pentecostal Heritage.

For a long season as Israel drifted aimlessly on, the Old Testament was silent on Tithes. Then suddenly and with terrifying impact, the angry voice of Almighty God thundered forth in Divine Wrath, indicting the entire Nation of Israel .

"Will a man rob God?" (Malachi3) "Yet ye have robbed me." "But ye say wherein have we robbed thee?" "In Tithes and offerings".

"Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation".

Webster defines the term "**ROB**" as follows: "To Take something away from by force"; "To steal from"; "To deprive or withhold from"; "To defraud".

Imagine if you will how an entire nation had become a "**ROBBER'S ROOST**" and was not aware of it.

Many individual professing Christians are robbers in God's sight because they withhold God's Tenth or Tithe. Furthermore I propose to show in this discourse on tithing that many Assemblies have become virtual "**ROBBER'S ROOST**" **AND DON'T KNOW IT**. Not because their members do not religiously tithe; But because **THOSE WHO HAVE NO COMMAND TO DO SO TAKE THE**

TITHES. Hebrews 7:5 states uncompromisingly that only the Priest-Hood Ministry) HAVE A COMMANDMENT FROM GOD TO TAKE TITHES. Where in God's Bible has He ever commanded the church or a committee or a Board or a Secretary to take tithes? This Power or Authority was reserved solely to the Priest-Hood.

But a united voice rises shrilly and argumentatively, "It's so much more practical and business-like to let the Church collect the Tithes, pay the preacher and handle all expenses." "After all we have been blessed with great abundance under this System." "We can't trust the Pastor with "OUR" tithes."

Do they not realize that they are repeating almost verbatim the boast of the Laodicean Church in Rev. 3:17 - "**I AM RICH AND INCREASED WITH GOODS AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING.**"

But listen to the words of God, "**And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and "BLIND", and naked.**" (the shame of their robbery was exposed before God)

Good intentions are not enough in God's sight. In the folklore of England the story is told of Robin Hood, a merry rogue who lived in Sherwood Forest. Robin Hood was a bold and resourceful robber; But he was a different type of a robber. He robbed the rich and gave the booty to the poor. Naturally the people sang his praises far and wide. No doubt Robin Hood excused himself by saying, "Look at all the good I'm doing." His intentions may have been good, **BUT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LAW HE WAS STILL A ROBBER WITH A PRICE ON HIS HEAD.**

Good intentions, good arguments, adherence to business practices the world prescribes as sound, and seeking to be practical does not excuse a church or an individual christian in the sight of God, as long as they have no authority to do what they are doing. God's words to Moses (Heb. 8:5) apply to us also, "**SEE THAT THOU MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHEWED TO THEE.**"

Marshall all your facts, your figures, your reasons, your excuses and your arguments. Present them as logically and coherently as human intellect and reasoning can present them. Bring into play all your great and grand gifts of rhetoric and oratory. But when you are finished; and the echo of your voice dies in the stillness of the chamber and you rest your case; Just remember, you are too late. The case has already been tried, and Jesus Christ our Great High Priest handed down the verdict many centuries ago. - "**ONLY THE PRIEST-HOOD (MINISTRY) HAS A COMMANDMENT FROM GOD TO TAKE GOD'S TITHE OR TENTH FROM HIS PEOPLE**". Jesus said, (John 10:3) "**He that climbeth up some other way (except through Christ our High Priest) the same is a thief and a ROBBER**".

Continuing our brief history, tithes are mentioned in a number

of places in the Gospels. Jesus lends sanction to the paying of tithes by telling the Jews in Matthew 23:23 — "These ought ye to have done".

Paul in I Cor. 9:1-14 links the Levitical Tithing plan with the New Testament. Later in Hebrews Chapter 7 he expounds how that one of the duties of Jesus Christ as High Priest is to receive tithes.

CHAPTER 4

"THE HEART AND SOUL OF SCRIPTURAL TITHING"

It is assumed by many that tithing was first instituted at Mount Sinai; That it was a form of National Taxation applicable only to the Jew. Nothing could be further from the truth. "**TITHING IS A LIVING FINANCIAL LAW**". It did not begin with Moses, neither did it end when Christ was crucified. Tithing was naturally included in the Laws revealed to Israel ;but the Law of Moses could not end what it did not bring into existence.

Tithing was practiced centuries before the Law was given at Sinai. Abraham was paying tithes 140 years before Judah, after whom the Jews are named, was born. Jacob's vow or consecration was to give back a tenth or tithe of all that God gave him.

How did Abraham know to Tithe? How did he know where and to whom to pay his tithes? God discloses the mystery in Genesis 26:5 - "**Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charges, my commandments, my statutes and laws**". Why did Abraham tithe? Because God commanded him to tithe. It comes as a shock to many people when they realize for the first time that God instituted certain laws for man to keep centuries before the Law of Moses was given. Therefore we can but say that the Law of Tithing was among those God refers to in Genesis 26:5 that Abraham scrupulously kept.

But what significance does this hold for the New Testament Church? Why should Christians tithe? One should approach this study only with deepest reverence. Because here we are approaching the True Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. This is holy ground.

I speak this with a deep and profound conviction; "Only the true man of faith will ever wholeheartedly and without reservations believe and accept God's complete plan for tithing". Only true men of faith will ever grasp the significance of the truth contained here. Tithing is more than a carnal commandment under Moses Law. "**TITHING IS A TEST OF FAITH**". Notice that only great men of faith in the Old Testament grasped the truth of tithing and appropriated for themselves its inherent blessings. In simple laymen's

language, scriptural tithing implies full and complete partnership with God.

Assuming that Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews, he explains in Heb. 6:2 that Jesus Christ our High Priest, holds the rank, order and office of Melchisedec. Quote - "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec".

And who was Melchisedec? What part does he play? Paul tells us in Hebrews 7:1-3—"For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings and blessed him".

"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; First being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace".

Many of our Pentecostal ministers, both now and of yester-years believe Melchisedec to be a Theophany (Christ), or God manifested in human form. Elder G. T. Haywood propounded this belief. Others believe him to be only a Gentile King-Priest. If Melchisedec was a Theophany, then Abraham paid to Christ literally and in person God's "TENTH" or "TITHE". If he was only a Gentile King-Priest, then in type Abraham paid to Christ the tithe. Therefore one cardinal fact emerges, whether literally or in type — "CHRIST COLLECTED FROM ABRAHAM GOD'S TENTH OR TITHE".

Why is this so significant? For two reasons: (1) — Jesus Christ is our High Priest under the New Covenant. His is an unchangeable Priest-hood made forever after the order of Melchisedec. (2) — Abraham was not only the father of the circumcision, or Israelites under the Old Covenant; He is also the father of all the true believers in Christ under the New Covenant. Note Romans 4:11 — "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also".

This simply means that every born-again child of God, baptized in Jesus Name and filled with the Holy Ghost, IS A CHILD OF ABRAHAM.

Therefore in the way of an analysis or summary Note:

(1) — Tithing was a living financial Law centuries before the Old Covenant was given at Sinai. Moses Law merely adopted or included the Law of Tithing. Therefore if Moses Law could not end what it did not bring into existence, then the Law of Tithing was carried over into the New Testament, and is in effect today. A study of Paul's teachings in I Cor. 9:1-14 lead to no other conclusion.

(2) — Abraham, our Father in the faith (Rom. 4:11) paid tithes to Christ our High Priest through Melchisedec. A father's duty is to set a proper example for his children. Abraham was not derelict

in that duty. Therefore it would be the children's duty to follow the good example set by their father in the faith and pay tithes. Jesus told the Jews in John 8:39 — "IF YE WERE ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN, YE SHOULD DO THE WORKS OF ABRAHAM". Showing that just because the Jew had in his veins the blood of Abraham did not necessarily make him a true son of Abraham. A true child of Abraham is determined by whether HE DOES THE WORKS OF ABRAHAM. Tithing is a work that Abraham performed faithfully and conscientiously.

(3). — Visualize with me a huge tree which forks into two massive branches. The trunk is Abraham, father of us all. One of the branches is Israel under the Old Covenant. The other is the New Testament Church under the New Covenant. If Abraham the trunk paid tithes to Christ our High Priest; And Levi under the Old Covenant paid tithes to Christ, though in the loins of Abraham (Heb. 7:10). What would exempt the Christian, who is enjoying in its fulness that which was only types and shadows to Abraham and Levi, from paying tithes? Shall we charge God with inconsistency? Note the only logical conclusion: The Trunk pays; One of the branches pays; Why should not the other branch pay? It would be doing violence to the laws of Biblical interpretation to contend that the Christian is exempt from paying tithes.

(4) — Permit me to introduce the term "**UNCHANGEABLE**". According to Webster it means — "Not subject to variation or modification". Hebrews 7:21 states — "**The Lord sware and will not repent, thou are a Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec**". Verse 24 further states — "**But this man, because he continueth over, hath an "UNCHANGEABLE" Priest-Hood**". Verse 21 speaks of Jesus as High Priest, while verse 24 speaks of His Priest-hood. Now just what have we uncovered here? Permit me to answer as briefly as possible. In the light of Hebrews 7:21-24 the Priest-hood of Jesus Christ was to be an exact replica or copy of the Priest-hood of Melchisedec, without variation or modification.

God's purpose from the beginning in instituting the Law of Tithing was to provide material support or sustenance for the Priest-hood. Abraham's tithe to Melchisedec was not just a token whereby the Patriarch acknowledged the greatness of the King-Priest of Salem (Jeru-salem). Abraham payed tithes because tithing was the method God had ordained for the Priest-hood to be supported. It was the same under Moses Law. Paul says I Cor. 9:13 — "**Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple?**" (The tithe chamber was located inside the temple and was off-limits to all save the Priest-hood).

"BUT GOD HAS CHANGED HIS MIND, RENOUNCED HIS OATH AND GONE BACK ON HIS WORD." If that shocks you, just remember that is precisely what a person is teaching when they declare that the Law of Tithing was not carried over into the New

Testament Church. In substance they are declaring that God has changed the Priest-hood; that he has modified it; that everything after the Order of Melchisedec is the same today with the exception of paying tithes. Now what are such people who teach against tithing actually doing? Ignorantly or not **THEY ARE ROBBING THE PRIEST-HOOD OF THEIR RIGHTFUL INHERITANCE AND CHARGING GOD WITH FOLLY.**

(5) — Is Jesus Christ derelict in His duty as High Priest? Is He slothful in the business of the Priest-hood? The Secretary of the Treasury of the United States would certainly be slothful and incompetent if he did not scrupulously collect the taxes of the nation. The whole governmental machinery from the office of the Presidency down to that of the lowliest private in the army would come to a grinding halt. That is exactly what happened to Israel in the days of Nehemiah. Eliashib the High Priest moved Tobiah into the Tithe Chamber. Consequently the people ceased bringing in their tithes, the Priest-hood fled and the Temple service came to a halt.

But Jesus Christ is not derelict in His duty as High Priest. He is not slothful, neglectful or incompetent. He was and is **FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE** (Heb. 3:2). Does that include the Tithe Chamber? Is not the Tithe Chamber a part of His House? Could he be counted faithful in "ALL" His house if he did not provide support for His ministry? Moses was faithful in all his house and the Law of Moses provided for the Tithes to be the inheritance of the Priest-hood. What kind of inheritance has Christ provided for the Priest-hood of His house (New Testament Church)? Is Law better than Grace? Was the Levites inheritance better than the inheritance Christ provides for His ministry? **OR IS IT NOT THE SAME?**

If Melchisedec was not a Theophany, but only a Gentile Priest-King, could this mere man then be more faithful in His house than Jesus Christ is in His? Melchisedec faithfully received the tithes. Shall not Jesus Christ our High Priest do the same?

One of the duties of the High Priest was to collect God's tithe or tenth. If Jesus Christ is faithful in "ALL" His house, is he not faithful in the collection of the tithe also? Let God be true but every man a liar.

(6) One of the reasons we believe weddings are ordained of God is because Jesus blessed a wedding by a miracle and sanctified it by His presence. One of the reasons why we believe that Tithing is ordained of God is because that Christ, in or through Melchisedec, received tithes from Abraham and blessed him. Thus lending sanction to the Law of Tithing and showing that it is a Law of God. Note that the Bible teaches that **CHRIST DID THIS**, and not some shadowy priest back in antiquity as some would have us believe. If Christ received tithes from our father in the Faith Abraham and blessed him, how much more so will he bless Abraham's Children who pay their tithes to Him.

CHAPTER 5

"PAUL ENDORSES THE LEVITICAL PLAN OF TITHING FOR THE CHURCH"

One of the paradoxes of the Bible is that Paul, the Bible's most outspoken champion of Grace, beyond question endorsed the Levitical Law of Tithing as the proper method for the financing of the New Testament ministry. This fact may be baffling at first, but after thorough research and study on the part of the reader, all the facts will come to light and fit into a perfect and orderly pattern.

To understand this question, fix in your mind the fact that **TITHING IS A LIVING FINANCIAL LAW ORDAINED OF GOD FROM THE BEGINNING**. A law that only faith can appropriate. God created the earth, the sea, the wind, the rain, the seed, the fruit, the sunshine, the ox, the cow, man's intelligence, the petroleum and minerals in the ground, the metals to build his factories, and gave man the strength and understanding to use them to his own advantage in subduing the earth and making the earth yield to him her treasures. Therefore everything that is produced from the earth, the sea or the air belongs to God. The rich man could boast of his abounding barns and say, "My fruits; My Goods; My Barns; My Labors"; but God called him a fool. How much fruit would he have produced had not God given the land, the strength to till the soil, the intelligence to plant in due season, the rain at the proper time to water his crops, and the dry autumn to harvest them.

Therefore man is but a share-cropper. God says, "I am going to give you all these fruits as your reward for being the care-taker of my earth; But I am making one exception, **"THE FIRST TEN PERCENT BELONGS TO ME"**. In the place and to the person that I shall designate you will deposit or pay my **"TENTH"** or **"TITHE"**.

Now let us observe the role that faith plays. The man of faith adopts this commandment of God. But he wishes to be more than just a share-cropper. (one who grudgingly gives back the tithe.) He wants to form a partnership with God. He gladly and willingly gives back to God his tenth, because his faith appropriates the blessings that come through faithful tithing.

Therefore we say that in type, tithing is seen even in the Garden of Eden, where God reserved to himself one tree out of all the trees he gave to man for his use and enjoyment.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and Abel the firstlings of his flock to the Lord.

Abraham, blessed by Melchisedec, gave him tithes of all.

Jacob, upon receiving a revelation of God for the first time, vowed to give back to God a tenth or tithe or all that God would give to him. A revelation of God brought faith to Jacob, and faith appropriated the blessing that would be his through paying tithes.

How did these early Patriarchs know to pay tithes. Repeating what we have mentioned earlier, Genesis 26:5 discloses the secret. God writing of Abraham's faithfulness said. "**ABRAHAM OBEYED MY VOICE, AND KEPT MY CHARGE MY COMMANDMENTS, MY STATUTES AND MY LAWS**". Therefore God gave to man laws and commandments and statutes many centuries before the Law of Moses was given at Mount Sinai. The Law of Tithing was one of these laws. If this is not true, how else would Abraham or Jacob know to pay tithes?

Therefore the Law of Tithing did not begin with the Law of Moses; Neither could the Law of Moses end what it did not begin. If the Law of Moses could not end what it did not begin, then the "**LAW OF TITHING WAS CARRIED OVER INTO THE GRACE PERIOD AND IS IN EFFECT TODAY**".

Now just what did the Law of Moses do with reference to the Law of Tithing? The Law of Moses adopted or included the Law of Tithing and clarified or shall we say "**AMPLIFIED**" it. The word "Amplify" means to enlarge, to expand and to add particulars. Did man amplify the Law of Tithing under Moses Law? No — God did it; God expanded the Law of Tithing and added certain particulars. (I say added certain particulars; perhaps they were there all the time, but were never mentioned until the Law of Moses brought them forth) The fact that Moses Law adopted Tithing did not defile it for us.

Therefore Paul, without any fear whatsoever of taking the Church back under the Levitical Priest-hood, **ENDORSED AND SET FORTH THE LEVITICAL PLAN OF TITHING AS THE RIGHT AND PROPER AND GOD ORDAINED SYSTEM FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY**.

I propose to show that when God gave to the Levitical Priest-hood their system of tithing, **HE ACTUALLY HAD THE NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY IN MIND**. Why do we make this statement? Because the Levitical Priest-hood along with the Old Tabernacle were only types and shadows of things to come (Heb. 10:1). The earthly things to come of which the Levitical Priesthood is but a type, is the New Testament Ministry. The heavenly things are the sanctuary and the True Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man (Heb. 8:2) over which Jesus Christ as High Priest presides.

Paul thoroughly substantiates this point in Cor. 9:7-14 - Quoted-

"Who goeth a warfare anytime at his ovr charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the Law the same also?

For it is written in the Law of Moses, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

Verse 13—"Do ye not know that they which minister about Holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the Altar are partakers with the Altar?

Even so hath the Lord Ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the gospel.

Paul informs us in Verse 14* "The Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel". As believers of God's word we accept this because it is scripture; But we have a question: For the ministry to live of the gospel there would of necessity have to be some plan or procedure or system whereby funds would be solicited or collected and set aside for ministers pay or support. Such a plan to bear the stamp of authenticity and be generally accepted by a truth-minded people, would of necessity have to be inaugurated by God Himself. "Where in the New Testament is there to be found such a system"? "If the ministry is to be supported by a tax or subscription or assessment or by free-will offerings, then why is the Bible so silent over the matter"? That such a system or procedure or plan has been ordained of God and is functioning even at this very moment we cannot deny BECAUSE PAUL SAYS IT IS SO. We have a meticulous God. He notes even the sparrows fall. He numbers even the hairs on the heads of His people. Seeing that his greatest concern is for the Gospel to be preached to the whole world, would he have forgotten, or left out, or left to the mere whims and fancies of a fickle people the extremely serious matter of material suport for His ministers? I cannot believe it. Neither can any other sincere Christian believe it. To those misinformed individuals who believe and teach against New Testament Tithing, let them show us chapter and verse where God ever inaugurated any other plan for the support of His ministers?

The Key to the matter can be found in 1 Cor. 9:8. Certain

persons had ridiculed Paul's claim to Apostleship. They questioned His right to receive material support from the people. (Doubtless this is the reason Paul never accepted material support from the Corinthians.) They wanted to know who gave him the authority to demand material support from those to whom he ministered. In a thoroughly arcused manner he replied: "Say I these things as a man"? "Or saith not the Law the same also"? In other words Paul says, "If you reject and question my Apostleship and what I have to say about God's plan for ministerial support, **WILL YOU ACCEPT WHAT THE LAW SAYS?**" "Because what I teach is exactly what the Law teaches; and what the Law teaches is exactly what I teach".

Again we ask the searching question, "If Paul does not have reference to the Law of Tithing, then what system or Law or procedure or plan does he have reference to"? "And if it is a plan other than God's tithing plan then where in the New Testament was it ever inaugurated"? The only logical conclusion that can be drawn from Paul's words is that relative to the question of tithing or support for the ministry, **PAUL'S TEACHING AND THE LEVITICAL TEACHING ARE ONE AND THE SAME.**

To further bolster his point, notice how the great Apostle reaches back into the Moses Law and brings up the matter of muzzleing the ox. "For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." "Doth God take care of oxen?" "Or saith he it altogether for our sakes?" "For our sakes no doubt this is written".

The lesson portrayed in this text should be obvious to all discerning readers. God is naturally concerned about the welfare of faithful animals; But this was not His primary purpose in giving this commandment. This commandment was only a type or shadow of how the New Testament ministry should be supported. God's real purpose was to insure that the New Testament ministry would receive the support or portion he had allotted them and that they would receive it in accordance to the plan or procedure he had ordained.

In conclusion let us notice how that Paul links the New Testament ministry directly with those who served in the temple. In verse 2 he asks, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things"? Then in verse 13—"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the Temple"?

THE LAW OF TITHING SHALL EXIST AS LONG AS GOD HAS A PRIEST-HOOD ON THIS EARTH. When the Priest-hood ceases then the Law of Tithing will cease. Tithes and the Priest-hood are inseparable. Separate Tithes from the Priest-hood and they are no longer Tithes, only a religious assessment. God ordained the Law of Tithing for no other purpose save the support of His Priest-

hood (ministers). That is why no other hands save the hands of the Priest-hood can lawfully touch the tithes. Abraham paid tithes directly to God's High Priest—Melchisedec. The Levites under Moses Law were commanded to take tithes from the people, and in turn they tithed to the High Priest in the Temple. Jesus Christ our "HIGH PRIEST" has ordained that his New Testament ministers receive the tithe for Him from the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them Overseer.

CHAPTER 6

"THE TITHE AND THE DENOMINATIONAL HEADQUARTERS"

There are those who maintain that if the Levitical Method of tithing is the pattern for the New Testament Church, then all the tithes should be collected and sent to the Organizational Headquarters to be parcelled out as they see fit.

If God had ordained the Episcopal System of Religious Hierarchy as the proper form of New Testament Church Government, and if all the churches were together under one central Government as was Israel, then perhaps this would be true. But God has not ordained this system. The New Testament shows beyond question "**THAT THE LOCAL CHURCH OR ASSEMBLY WAS SOVEREIGN**", **FUNCTIONING UNDER THE HEADSHIP OR AUTHORITY OF ITS BISHOP OR PASTOR**, who as the shepherd is alone responsible for the welfare of his flock. Again I repeat, "I can find no higher office of an executive nature in the New Testament than that of the Pastor or Bishop. This has also been the concensus of the Pentecostal ministry from its beginning.

The question naturally arises at this point, "What about the Organizational Official"? We answer with due respect: Organization like the Jewish Sabbath, is made for man and not man for Organization. It is a piece of man-made machinery; Worthwhile machinery as long as it functions as the servant of the collective ministry and not as their Lord. When Organization becomes a Lord or Dictator, then the purpose for its existence has become perverted. Officials are democratically chosen servants, selected to carry out the directives of the ministry and is at all times answerable to the ministry. That is why we maintain the New Testament knows no higher office than that of Bishop or Pastor. Organization is by "**PERMISSION AND NOT BY COMMANDMENT**".

That is why over-centralization perverts the true purpose of wholesome, constructive organization. Constructive organization, Christ centered and functioning within prescribed scriptural bounds

is but the collective efforts of an equal brother-hood to promote certain joint projects and maintain a healthy fellowship among men of like precious faith.

Of late the question is bearing heavily on the minds of thoughtful and concerned men everywhere—"When does organization cease to be constructive?" "What are the tell-tale symptoms that centralization of government and power are reaching a dangerous and unscriptural stage"? Permit me to set forth three rules by which one can judge accurately and precisely.

(1) When Organization ceases to recognize and promote the absolute sovereignty of the Holy Ghost.

(2) When it ceases to promote the equality of Brother-hood among the ministry, and seeks dictatorial control over the ministry.

(3) When it begins to seek arbitrary power and authority over the local church and its property and finance. Organization does not have to own local property out-right to exercise arbitrary power and control over it.

Observe the striking difference between constructive organization and over-centralization of government and power. Constructive organization is a servant; Over-centralization is a tyrant. Constructive Organization entreats and pleads for cooperation; Over-centralization demands, and lays down ultimatums. Constructive Organization stresses Equality of Brother-hood among the ministry; Over-centralization would substitute an unscriptural graduated system of Hierarchy. Constructive Organization exalts the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost; Over-centralization recognizes only the sovereignty of its man-made system. Constructive Organization knows its boundaries and its limitations; Over-centralization usurps authority, recognizes no boundaries and no master but itself and is guilty of presumption. Constructive Organization generates the spirit of true fellowship among an equal brother-hood; Over-centralization generates fear, mis-trust, apprehension, and division. Constructive Organization enhances and sanctions and lends dignity to God's ministry and establishes its authority; Over-centralization usurps the authority of the ministry, seeks to down-grade it, to prostitute it, to ensalve it and make of it a hireling. Constructive Organization is a blessing, a spring of life, a worth-while vehicle to better facilitate the commands of our Lord to "Go Ye". Over-centralization is a leech, a blight, a parasite, seeking the very spiritual and material life-blood of a spiritual people. Constructive Organization derives its strength, its encouragement, and its nourishment from the ministry because it is the spiritual off-spring or brain-child of the ministry; Over-centralization emasculates ministerial authority, exploits the ministry and robs it of its prerogatives. Constructive Organization welcomes the move of the Holy Ghost, and rejoices in the anointing and refuses to proceed without the

sanction of God; Over-centralization ignores God's anointing, plows mechanically ahead without its sanctions and freezes out both the spiritual move and spiritual man of God. **TO CONSTRUCTIVE ORGANIZATION, THE MINISTRY IS ITS MASTER: OVER-CENTRALIZATION MASTERS THE MINISTRY.**

The scourge of "**GOVERNMENT BY GOD**" from the beginning has been Over-Centralization. Babylon or "**BABEL**" is a striking example. The name "**BAB-EL**" means "**GATES OF GOD**". How deceptive names can be. In their rebellious move toward Over-centralization they rather made it the "**GATES OF HELL**".

Three predominating motives prompted these "**TOWER-BUILDERS**" of Babel. Those same three motives are prompting the Tower-builders of our day.

Observe their startling modern-day parallels.

- (1) Let us build us a Tower.
- (2) Let us make us a Name.
- (3) Let us do this lest we be scattered.

Their building materials were quite unique and fraught with meaning. Slime had they for mortar and brick had they for stone; both substitutes for the real. In fact the brick were out-right man-made.

"**BABEL**" was built primarily as a memorial to the glory and sovereignty of man. In rejecting God's command to scatter abroad (decentralize) they also rejected His sovereignty or right to rule over them. The further away from God a people get, the higher the Towers they build to themselves. Note the Roman Catholic Tower, and the Towers of Modern Protestantism. Also since certain Trinitarian Pentecostals abandoned Holiness, their Towers are rising quite high.

"**LET US MAKE A NAME**". Israel insisted, "But we will have a King over us that we be like other people". All the other nations had long since rejected the Sovereignty of God; Israel wished to be like them. They wanted something visible—tangible. Their human flesh and spirits craved the pomp, the ceremony, the heady feeling that only pride in human accomplishments can gender. This same spirit can be seen in the "**UNHOLY AND EVEN FRENZIED SPIRIT OF COMPETITION**" that has invaded our ranks. The love for God's House and the Holy fiery Zeal for his cause that should be the motivating spirit behind all that we do in many instances has been replaced by the "**SPIRIT OF COMPETITION**". We are going to build a bigger and more beautiful church; We want a greater number in Sunday School; We're going to raise more money in this special drive;—"WHY"? To get ahead of other churches; To beat the fellows across town; To be first in the district and win a plaque; "**TO MAKE A NAME FOR OURSELVES**".

The inordinate desire to build a taller tower than the other fellow and to make a name for ourselves has become a Pentecostal obsession. In many of our great meetings the Spirit of Competition is much more in evidence than the Spirit of God. Churches are being saddled with unimaginable debt and financial burdens. Sin and the world are allowed to infiltrate the church wholesale. The ministry who at all times should be alert and fearless, are advised to close their mouths and look the other way. All because the boat must not be rocked. The notes are too high. Expenses must be met. Somebody may become offended. We cannot afford to lose anybody. We could never face the other churches with our heads up if our Sunday School was permitted to drop. The prestige of our church is at stake. Tower builders all, caught up in a numbers complex and plainly showing how that unholy competition dramatizes the "BAB-EL" motive of **LET US MAKE US A NAME**.

"**LEST WE BE SCATTERED ABROAD**" illustrates another facet of Over-centralization — "Man's drive for collective security". With their faith in God eroded, they abandon God's ordained plan of tithing that would keep their ministries free and unfettered, and seek out for themselves carnal, earthly methods to assure collective security. Always given time and a religious denomination will develop a system whereby the ministry is provided complete earthly security, if not from the cradle to the grave, at least from the Seminary to the grave. This is done in the form of educational advantages, guaranteed pastorates, insurance policies, annuities, health insurance and generous retirements. This binds the ministry completely and irrevocably, just as it was meant to do, to their particular ecclesiastical system. The roots of the minister's life thus become so deeply imbedded in his denomination that to break loose would spell professional, social and economic ruin. Such built in security hold men with a hypnotic fascination that is beyond reasoning. I cannot afford to leave my church, they say. "The price would be too great"; "I'm getting old and there's no place to go"; "Look at my insurance, my retirement; I would forfeit it all". Therefore regardless of how deeply apostate their denomination may become, they are bound hard and fast to it.

God broke up the Tower of Babel, confused their languages and scattered the people.

The Church at Jerusalem indulged in Over-centralization, even to the extent of installing a type of "**Religious Communism**". But their schemes were not practical, and because they refused to heed the commands of God to "Go into all the world", God sent persecution and scattered them.

The Spirit of Over-centralization is the spirit of "**ONE-WORLDISM**". It is the spirit behind the present day Ecumenical movement. The Roman Catholic Hierarchy is one facet of itsulti-

mate development. While in the end, Over-centralization will bring into being the Kingdom of the Anti-Christ.

Repeatedly the question is asked, "Why must a religious Movement be so blind to the glaring lessons of history"? Why cannot they see that each step, each objective they so laboriously negotiate toward Over-centralization, toward collective security, toward the building of an Ecclesiastical Tower to make a Name for themselves, are but mile-posts down the road toward shameless denominationalism and spiritual oblivion. That every other single religious movement of the past without exception proceeded with the same blinded fascination down this same old worn-out beaten path. That each mile-post they are now passing, others passed years and perhaps centuries ago; That each objective they are expending so much anxiety over others long ago negotiated; That their dreams of tall towers, ivy covered institutions, men of the cloth, built in security and even the honor and pomp and plaudits of the world became realities many long years ago. But sadly — "**AT WHAT COST**"? They lost God in the process. No longer does God move with mighty power through miracles and signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost when they assemble together. Their ministry has become soiled and sullied and salaried and subdued. Their people are no longer pure, separate from the world, living apart from sin. You see, God must be sovereign of man's all, else he will not be sovereign at all. It simply boils down to this, "When men reject the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost over their lives and works, **THEY SEE ONLY WHAT THEY WANT TO SEE**".

Returning to the question of New Testament Church Government, the words "**Bishop**", "**Pastor**", "**Presbyter**" and "**Elder**" for all practical purposes are synonymous term, designating the same office. Instead of signifying a graduated ministerial system of one office taking precedence over other offices, they rather designate an "**EQUALITY OF BROTHERHOOD**" among the New Testament ministry. The Holy Ghost alone is sovereign. The anointing of the Holy Ghost are the true credentials of a God called New Testament preacher of the gospel. This does not mean that the early church did not give letters of introduction and recommendation.

Men were called and chosen and sent and installed in or taken out of office by the discretion of the Holy Ghost. This is precisely documented in Acts 13:1-4 — As Paul and Barnabas and certain Elders prayed and fasted and ministered unto the Lord, "**The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them**". In Acts 20:28 Paul soberly admonished the Ephesian Elders — "**Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the HOLY GHOST (not Hierarchy) hath made you overseers (bishops)**".

Why did Paul use the term, "**Take heed unto yourselves**"?

Because in verse 30 he says, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them".

One can note that the great Apostle was speaking with prophetic insight. Because later in the Book of Revelation, what had doubtless been but a trend and perhaps a doctrine when Paul admonished the Ephesian Elders had become "**DEEDS**" in the church of Ephesus by the time John wrote to the seven churches of Asia.

What were the Ephesians guilty of doing? Refusing to heed or else forgetting the words of Paul, they had given over to the Doctrines of Nicaolaitanes and had installed a graduated ministerial system of Bishops over Bishops. Certain power hungry men did arise, just as Paul said they would, who desired to be Lords (dictators) over God's heritage and drew away many. And here is a warning to us, "**EPHESUS WAS A ONE GOD BELIEVING, BAPTIZED IN JESUS NAME, TONGUE TALKING CHURCH FOUNDED BY PAUL HIMSELF, WITH PROBABLY BETTER TEACHING AND MORE TRUTH THAN ANY OTHER CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**". Why do we make such a claim? Because Ephesus is the one church out of seven in Revelation that God chose to represent the early New Testament period of Church history.

Why are both the Laodicean and Nicaolaitane systems of church government cursed of God? Simply because they take away the Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost and seek to pervert God's ordained ministry to their own selfish and greedy purposes. There is nothing wrong with boards and committees as long as they stay within their prescribed boundaries. But when Boards and Committees under the chairmanships of men go beyond their prescribed boundaries and usurp the power and functions and duties reserved only to the Holy Ghost they can but invite the blight and curse of God .

The word "**BISHOP**" means "**OVERSEER**". That is as Pastor he is the Overseer of the local assembly; But only Christ qualifies for the office of general Overseer. The word "**PASTOR**" means "**SHEPHERD**"; But only Christ is chief Shepherd. "**THE NEW TESTAMENT NOWHERE TEACHES DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PASTORS OVER PASTORS**". Pastors over Pastors constitute Religious Hierarchy. Such is the Doctrine of the Nicaolaitanes which God hates.

Naturally the question of Jerusalem's authority over the local Assemblies as well as the ministry loom as the deciding factor in any discussion of New Testament Church Government. If there was a Hierarchy System recognized in the Early New Testament Church it would only be natural that Jerusalem would be the Headquarters.

Just what authority then did Jerusalem exercise? We answer without hesitation, "Jerusalem exercised no arbitrary power or authority over any of the early New Testament Churches or ministry."

As the initial or first custodians of the truth, any power that the Church of Jerusalem exercised over other churches or ministers was that of influence, of Godly example, of persuasion, of entreaty, and that of a more experienced counsellor along the lines of spiritual revelation. To this simple writer this should be the prescribed boundaries in which any man-made religious organization should function.

The Church of Jerusalem did not own or control in any way the properties or finances of the local churches elsewhere. There is no record that they ever sought to restrict or restrain any assembly in the free exercise of their own local church affairs. Neither did they seek to control the movements or ministeries of any Apostle, Elder, Evangelist, Teacher or Missionary. This was left entirely to the discretion of the Holy Ghost.

That Jerusalem had absolutely nothing to do with the sending forth of Barnabas and Paul can be seen by the fact that it was a group of Elders and Prophets and Teachers, either local men or else men who were at that time tarrying in Antioch, who laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and launched them on their Missionary Career. For proof of this study carefully Acts Chapter 20.

Relative to the question of ordination is the subject of the "PRESBYTER" and his identity. The word "Presbyter" in the singular is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. The word "Presbytery" (plural) is mentioned but once in the Bible and that in I Timothy 4:14 — "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the "PRESBYTERY".

The word "PRESBYTERY" comes from the Greek word "PRES-BUTERION" and means "THE ORDER OR ESTATE OF ELDERS". Every God ordained preacher of the gospel is an "ELDER", and every New Testament Church Elder must be a God ordained preacher of the Gospel. The New Testament no more endorses LayElders than it does Pastors over Pastors. This confirms our statement made earlier that the words "Elder", "Bishop", "Pastor" and "Presbyter" are synonymous terms designating the same office.

That the Presbytery was not a select group of ministers chosen out of the main body and elevated to a higher rank can be seen by the fact that when Paul and Barnabas needed to be ordained for their missionary career, the church in Antioch did not send for a committee from Jerusalem, but used the ministers who happened at that time to be residing in the local assembly at Antioch to perform this function. Thus the Presbytery is the "COMPLETE BODY" or "WHOLE" of the New Testament ministry. Every God Ordained minister of the Gospel "IS A MEMBER OF THE PRESBYTERY, THUS ONCE AGAIN ILLUSTRATING THE EQUALITY OF BROTHERHOOD AMONG THE NEW TESTAMENT MINISTRY. Therefore the men in our ranks whom we term "PRESBYTERS" are in

reality chosen representatives selected by the "PRESBYTERY" or collective ministry, to represent them in certain matters of a spiritual and business and ceremonial nature.

The question arises, "Who presided over this ordination service?" And if this was not an ordination service, then where in the New Testament was Paul or Barnabas ever ordained by the hands of men? The answer is not difficult. Inasmuch as this procedure took place in a local church or assembly it is only logical that the Bishop or Pastor presided. The fact looms quite obvious for all discerning people to see that when the ministry operates under the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost the rituals and ceremonies of men are not given too much prominence.

From simple, local, New Testament Church procedure the rise of the Papacy (Nicaolaitanism) can be easily traced. We repeat the highest office God ordained in the New Testament Church was that of Bishop or Pastor. Due to poor transportation and communication many local assemblies did not have a centrally located meeting place where all the members could meet at one time. Rather the Bishop had a number of preaching places scattered over a city and modelled after present day cottage meetings. As membership and preaching places grew the Bishop or Pastor would naturally need assistants to help. Thus accounting for the term "Elders" (Plural) in James 5:14.

Each cottage group in time could easily grow into a full sized assembly. An ambitious man with a strong personality and marked leader-ship ability, found fertile fields for expansion. This is especially true when he chose to ignore the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost. Instead of relinquishing his power over these local assemblies when they grew too large and too numerous for him to handle, he installed in them Pastors of his own choice. Men who would bow down to his leadership because they were obligated to him for their churches and even their financial support. Thus we can see the beginning of the Nicaolaitane system of Pastors over Pastors.

Therefore in a large city, and this was especially true in Rome, where originally there was only a struggling local assembly, with several preaching places, there came into being a full-sized diocese consisting of many churches under the jurisdiction of a General Over-seer. This is where the term "BISHOP" became perverted. Scripturally it referred only to a local Pastor. Now it had come to mean "GENERAL OVERSEER".

In due course the office of General Overseer became a permanent one. When the General-Bishop passed on, his successor was immediately elected and the office was never permitted to lay idle. Paul could easily have installed this system over the churches he founded, but he refused to usurp the Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost. He also warned the Ephesian Elders against doing

so. But in his heart of hearts he knew that the coming of the Nicaolaitane System was inevitable. When men reject the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost over their lives, they would naturally reject the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost over their churches. This is precisely what Israel did when they rejected Samuel's entreaty and rebelliously declared, "But we will have a King over us". This is precisely what the Church at Ephesus did. What was but a doctrine or trend in the last days of Paul, had become "**DEEDS**" by the time John wrote the book of Revelation.

Pursuing the history of Nicaolitanism further: Soon the question of a centrally organized system having jurisdiction over the entire body of believers, including their property and their preachers, arose. Thus came into being the graduated ministerial systems of Priests, Bishops, Arch-Bishops, Cardinals and Pope. That there was no scriptural justification for any of these offices seemed not to matter. They justified their sins of presumption by teaching that the Church of Jerusalem was in reality the Mother Church originally, exercising jurisdiction over all the other churches and ministers with Peter the first Pope. When Peter moved to Rome (which is a historical absurdity) then the seat of Power and government shifted from Jerusalem to Rome.

How did it all start? I cannot write this without a tinge of bitter sadness. This bitter sadness, I believe, is akin to that which Paul must have felt when he warned the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20. It all started when the Local Churches lost their "**SOVEREIGNTY**" and the ministry shackled with Ecclesiasticism, lost their freedom under God to preach as only the Holy Ghost would direct.

Can it happen to us? If what I am writing is not Bible Truth; and if I am not writing with motives that are pure in every way, then I am worthy of the condemnation of the reader. But if this is based on Bible Truth, and if I write only out of a heart filled with love and concern and admiration for a movement and a people and a ministry to which I have given a quarter of a century of faithful and dedicated service, then the least the reader can do is to give these words serious consideration. **IT IS THE CONCENSUS OF A LARGE SEGMENT OF OUR MINISTERS THAT OVER-CENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT AND POWER IS REACHING A DANGEROUS STAGE.** Fear is being voiced from the grass-roots. You hear it whispered in the lobbies, over the coffee cups, around the dining tables, everywhere preachers meet, fear is a dominating factor in their conversations. The trends, the spirit, the machinery that has already been set in motion is little short of terrifying to the discerning eye. Will there—can there be a rolling back, an annulling of past actions, a reassessment of past values? Only the future can tell. The histories of other religious movements certainly lend no encouragement. Positions and salaries and prestige and power and pride and apathy are

built in safe-guards against reform, a type of ecclesiastical insulation that protects and guarantees the status-quo.

Yet in the face of such dark pessimism we must soberly warn in the fear of God, "If Jesus tarries and the trend toward Over-Centralization is not checked and in some areas rolled back the harvest can be a bitter one. The day can easily dawn when the ministry will lose their God-given freedom to preach as only the Holy Ghost and their convictions so dictate, and the local churches can lose their right to govern themselves and control their property.

That Jerusalem exercised no jurisdiction over Paul can be seen by the fact it was nearly 14 years after his first visit before Paul finally checked back with Jerusalem. And then not to receive orders or instructions, but to determine whether his doctrine harmonized with that which God had given the Jerusalem Church at Pentecost.

Galatians 2:6 in the Amplified version gives this very interesting account of Paul's visit—"Quote", "Moreover no new requirements were made by those who were reputed to be something, though what was their individual position and whether they really were of importance or not makes no difference to me. God is not impressed with the positions that men hold and He is not partial and recognizes no external distinctions. Those I say who were of repute imposed no new requirements upon me—had nothing to add to my gospel and from them I received no new suggestions."

Verse 9—"James and Cephas (Peter) and John, who were reputed to be pillars of the Jerusalem Church, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, with the understanding that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Jew)."

Doubtless the most charitable thing that we could say is that Paul's little discourse here is rather deflationary to the egos of men who put great stock in some ecclesiastical position. There are certainly no traces here of a Religious Hierarchy; but only that of an Equality of Brotherhood among the ministry.

Note the expression in Verse 9, "With the understanding". Showing that instead of an Episcopal System handing down iron-fisted orders or ultimatums, here were equals and fellow-laborers in the gospel, sitting down at a common table and conferring together on how best to spread this glorious gospel.

In discussing the matter of Church Government there are those who will invariably return to the "Broken-record" theme that Paul exercised great authority over a number of churches. Granting that Paul's authority was somewhat extraordinary, those who advocate the Hierarchy System can certainly find no comfort here. Instead of lending sanction to the Episcopal System, IT ONLY SHOWS THE GREAT POWER AND AUTHORITY GOD GIVES

THE INDIVIDUAL MINISTER OVER THE WORK OF HIS OWN HANDS. For an ecclesiastical dignitary democratically elected in a meeting tainted with politics to assume or seek to assume the power and prerogatives Paul exercised is not only an absurdity, it is also presumption of the rankest sort. Usurped power is stolen power. History clearly proves that stolen power is dangerous power, both to the usurper as well as to the Kingdom of God. It can and usually does destroy both.

Let those presumptuous individuals who feel they have a mandate to exercise Paul's authority first match Paul's qualifications. Let them lay their credentials on the table for the whole world to scrutinize. Paul's right to exercise such power could be summed up under three headings: Note -

(1) Paul was an Apostle; perhaps the greatest Apostle that ever lived.

(2) Paul refused to labor only in virgin territory where no other man had ever labored. He refused to build on any other man's foundation. A far cry from those individuals who at the drop of a hat will invade the local church and take the reins out of the hands of a faithful Pastor who has spent the best years of his life in building up his work (3). - Like a woman in travail, Paul had gone down to the very valley of the shadow of death to give birth and life and being to these churches. Everyone of them without exception were the products of his own untiring labor. He was jealous over them with a God'y jealousy. Therefore can anyone deny but that God would hold Paul responsible to see that each church was properly grounded in the truth and staffed with qualified leadership.

I again repeat emphatically, "**GOD GIVES A MAN GREAT AUTHORITY OVER THE WORK OF HIS OWN HANDS**". Faithful shepherds who have given the choice years of their life and dissipated their strength to build up and sustain their flock have every right to resent dictatorial intervention. I say again, let those who would exercise Paul's power and prerogatives first demonstrate Paul's qualifications and credentials.

But to further disembowel the Episcopal teaching, if Paul was the General Bishop or Over-seer over all these churches and if such an office was to become a permanent one - "**THEN IN WHOSE HANDS DID HE LEAVE THIS OFFICE AT HIS PASSING?**" The answer cannot be refuted: Paul left no successor, and of a certainty Jerusalem never supplied one. Nowhere is it even intimated that Timothy or Titus or any of the other co-workers of Paul assumed the office of General Over-seer of these Churches after Paul was taken away.

Realizing that he would soon be taken from them, he left in his stead a standard of rules or qualifications to be used in select-

ing both Bishops (Pastors) and Deacons. Those qualifications are set forth in Titus Chapter 1, and 1 Timothy Chapter 3.

I speak this word of warning soberly and from a heart filled with deepest concern. We have had our share of men to arise in our ranks who presumptuously felt that God had ordained them to exercise the Power of General Bishop over His Spirit filled Church or segment thereof. Almost without exception these men died in shame and many of them in ill-repute. It is a tragedy that their spirits could not have been buried with their bones. Because their spirits have arisen to stalk the land. If there was ever a time in our history when the ministry needs to demonstrate an extraordinary courage and alertness it is today.

Considering this somewhat lengthy discourse on Church Government, "**WHO THEN IS QUALIFIED TO COLLECT THE TITHES?**" Let us return to the words of Paul for an answer. I refer you to 1 Cor. 9:7-11.

(Verse 7) — "Who goeth a warfare anytime at his own expenses? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"

(Verse 11) — "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"

Let us subject the above text to interrogation: (1) — Who plants, tends, prunes and waters the vineyard? Answer — The Husbandman or Vinedresser. Whose right is it then to eat of the fruit of the Vineyard? Answer — The Husbandman's or Vine-dresser. (2) — Who tends and guards and feeds the flock, spending sleepless nights and expending his strength without thought for himself? Answer — The Shepherd or Pastor. Whose right is it to eat of the milk and fatness of the flock? Answer — The Shepherds or Pastor's.

CHAPTER 7

"TOUCH NOT MINE ANOINTED"

Contrary to the opinions and practices of many in modern religion, tithes were never ordained of God to be used for the purpose of erecting church buildings, buying buses, paying general church expenses and utility bills or for the repair and maintenance of church buildings. There is no recorded instance in either the Old or New Testament where tithes were ever used in erecting the Tabernacle, or in the building of either Solomon's or Zerubbabel's Temple. Nor was the tithe used in their up-keep or maintenance.

May I again remind the reader that many of the early pioneer ministers of our faith held strong convictions along these lines; so much so that they taught that God would not bless and prosper a church whose buildings had been erected with tithe money.

Tithes (and note carefully please) were ordained of God but for one purpose, namely — "**THAT THERE MAY BE MEAT IN MINE HOUSE**" (Mal. 3:10). In other words, God set apart the tenth or tithe for himself and hallowed it solely for "**THE FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL SUPPORT OF THE PRIEST-HOOD OR MINISTRY**". I challenge creation to successfully refute this. There is not one single place in either the Old or New Testament, neither by commandment, or type or shadow or reference where "**GOD'S TENTH OR TITHE WAS EVER TO BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE SAVE TO SUPPORT THE PRIEST-HOOD OR MINISTRY**". Tithes and the Priest-hood are inseparable. Separate tithes from the Priest-hood and they are no longer tithes—only a church assessment. Furthermore if the Christian is going to set apart a tenth of his income and call it tithes, then no one but the ministry has a Bible right to touch it. How long shall spirit filled Christians that should know better reject and set at naught God's express commandments?

But the shrill plaintive wail rises piteously, "I cannot see paying tithes to a preacher; a mere man; an individual." Are you a child of Abraham? Remember Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham. Abraham our father in the faith paid tithes to Melchisedec — an individual, a person. Melchisedec without hesitation and without shame received the tithe from the hands of our Father Abraham and who dares say he did not use it for his own personal support? The psychology that is being employed in our day is: "If you can't rob the Priest-hood of their inheritance, then try to shame them into giving it up".

Under the Levitical Priest-hood, tithes were the Levites inheritance. When the land of Israel was divided, each of the twelve tribes with the exception of Levi, received their portion. To the Levites God gave certain cities, certain offerings around the Tabernacle and for an inheritance, "**ALL THE TITHES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL**" (Num. 18:21).

Therefore there are some things unauthorized hands just better not touch. This is explicitly illustrated in I Samuel, Chapter 4:

Israel suffers a tragic loss to the Philistines; they permit the Ark of the Covenant to be captured. Instead of the Ark becoming a prize over which they can gloat, it becomes a curse and a burden and a thing of destruction and terror to the Philistines. Because of their presumptuous handling of the sacred Ark, thousands died under the most horrible plagues sent by God. Calling their Diviners and Priests together, they formulate a plan to send

the Ark back to it's rightful place, and lift the plague off their land. Their methods were quite clever and ingenious. They simply placed the Ark on a "**NEW CART**" and hitched two milk cows to it and sent the Ark off to Israel.

Bethshemesh was the nearest city to Philistia, so the Ark came to Bethshemesh, whose inhabitants rejoice to see it coming. But they too commit the presumptuous sin of handling the Ark and God destroyed over 50,000 of their number.

Finally the Ark comes to a resting place in the House of Abinadab, where it remained for 20 years.

The setting changes and David becomes King. One of his first acts was to seek the return of the Ark. So David and all the chosen men of Israel gather at the house of Abinadab (2 Sam. 6:3). Without taking time to consult the Law of Moses which specifically stated that the Ark must be carried on the shoulders of the Priest-hood, they placed the Ark (note please) on a "**NEW CART**" and hitched the oxen to the cart and away they go with appropriate shouting and rejoicing and dancing and all to the sound of music.

Their false enthusiasm mounted to a frenzy. One can almost hear them exult, "We've launched a New Program in Israel". "We've finally found the right gimmick on which to transport the Ark". "We've launched **OPERATION LITTLE RED WAGON**"; "The Ark was too much of a burden for you Levites to carry on your shoulders, so we are going to relieve you of that responsibility and put it on wheels"; "We can move it a lot easier and faster and much more conveniently this way"; "And after all to keep up with present day efficiency, we should modernize this thing". "It is only good practical common sense and even you Levites will agree **THAT IT WORKS**". "You Levites should be ashamed of yourselves; your motives must be wrong; you have the wrong spirit; you are so selfish insisting that the Ark be carried only on your shoulders". (These are the most common arguments one hears from those who are guilty of changing the scriptural plan for tithing).

But the oxen stumbled and shook the Ark. Uzzah, a fine, conscientious, well-meaning lad, stretched out his hand with the worthy intention of steadyng the Ark. He did not want the Ark to fall to the ground and be broken. He meant well; but the sin of presumption is a terrible sin in God's sight. Uzzah's hands were unauthorized hands. God's anger was kindled against him and God smote him and he died.

Now here is the tragedy of Uzzah — an innocent, ignorant victim of other men's blunders. David or any of the Priest-hood had they been in their right minds could have saved him. But they

were carried away with a "**PHILISTINE EXPEDIENCY**" (an earthly gimmick—or substituting worldly methods to promote the work of God and rejecting God's ordained methods). A Micaiah standing nearby and in tune with God would have shouted, "Uzzah, don't touch that Ark": "Leave it alone and let the Oxen shake it"; "Let it fall to the ground and be broken, then perhaps the Priest-hood will come to their senses and bear it according to God's prescribed methods".

Laodicea, with the approval of modern day Eliashibs, have moved Tobiah-like into the tithe chamber. They have appropriated for themselves the inheritance of the Levite. In the average secular church of the world today, laity rule (democracy) has become an obsession. With their boards and committees and treasuries they have shunted the ministry aside and invaded even the most sacred precincts of ministerial authority. Relative to the tithes, they say that it is too much responsibility for one man alone to control them; That it is much more efficient; more business like; that it will invite greater public confidence to put them all in a common treasure and pay the Pastor a stipulated salary. Invariably and even some of our preachers voice this argument, they say, "**LOOK HOW IT WORKS**". Look at the abundance we have accumulated; the beautiful churches we are building out of the tithe, and the great programs we are sponsoring.

In this they are right, but in a way they do not realize. Material abundance is the one outstanding characteristic of Laodicea other than Luke-warmness. But instead of being a blessing, it is a curse to them. Gain is not Godliness, especially when it is achieved at the expense of obedience. David could have conveniently used every single one of Laodicea's arguments in favor of moving the Ark by the new Cart; But they would have all been wrong and Uzzah would still have lost his life. It shows a decay or deterioration of moral and spiritual fiber on the part of the preacher when he seeks to justify disobedience with the shop worn argument "**THAT IT WORKS**". In fact it smacks of the hireling spirit.

That the Laodicean methods are ruthlessly efficient, no one denies. Even the Bible confirms this fact by recording the Laodicean boast in Rev. 3:17 — "**I AM RICH AND INCREASED WITH GOODS AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING**". It is only natural that when hard-headed, cold-blooded business men take over the machinery of the church and run it like a business corporation with a board of directors, it will prosper materially. It will also prosper numerically; because there is something about this type of democratic operation, especially where everybody has a voice, that appeals to the rebellious instincts of carnal church members.

Mark the startling fact of how the Laodicean Spirit literally breeds "**INIQUITY**". Jesus said, (Matt. 24:12) — "**Because iniquity**

shall abound, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD". The word "Iniquity" means, "Rebellion against constituted authority". The church knows no greater constituted authority than that of the Bishop or Pastor. In setting up their democratic system of "Laity-Rule" in the church, Laodicea is guilty of iniquity. They have rebelled against God's true system of Church Government and substituted their own. Consequently God charges them with the sin or condition of "**LUKE-WARMNESS**" which is the same as "**WAXING COLD**". . . . The bitter harvest of iniquity or rebellion.

Death and decay have taken over the Laodicean Church of our day. Materially they are prosperous just as they boasted; But spiritually they are dead. (I speak this to warn every Pentecostal Assembly that is tainted with the leaven of Laodicea). They are guilty of touching God's anointed. Ponder this: Under Moses Law unauthorized hands had no more business touching the Tithe Chamber than Uzzah did when he touched the Ark. Both were off-limits to all save the Priest-hood. Of all the seven churches of Asia depicted in the book of Revelation and representative of the seven periods of Church History, Laodicea alone received no single word of praise or commendation from God. God has no word of praise or commendation for an assembly that will substitute democracy (laity rule) for the authority and rule of the shepherd.

What were the Laodiceans guilty of doing? In installing their democratic system (New Cart) they completely and irrevocably excluded Jesus Christ from their councils. He was not present, nor was His presence desired when their boards and committees and sub-committees met in session. (The usurper or robber is never too happy when the true owner appears). The Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost was scorned from their salaried pulpits, and rejected by their fashionable constituency. Relative to the Church of Laodicea, the posture of Jesus Christ is tragic. He is pictured standing outside the door and knocking for entrance.

Again we repeat, "**THERE ARE SOME THINGS UNAUTHORIZED HANDS BETTER NOT TOUCH**". Uzzah touched the Ark and died. Even a beast that would touch the mount (Sinai) must be put to death. Saul intruded into the office of the Priest-hood and offered sacrifice and lost his Kingdom and later his soul. Uzziah intruded into the office of the Priest-hood and offered incense and became a leper. God says, "**Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm**". Which can mean with either hand or tongue.

God's Tithe or Tenth was never intended to be touched by unauthorized hands. Again I repeat and Laymember fix this thought firmly in your mind, "**IF YOU ARE GOING TO GIVE BACK A TENTH TO GOD AND CALL IT TITHES, THEN SCRIPTURALLY**

NO ONE BUT THE PRIEST-HOOD (ministry) **HAS A RIGHT TO TOUCH IT**". If the scriptures do not substantiate that proposition then they cannot be depended on to substantiate any proposition. Tithes and the Priest-hood are inseparable. Tithes separated from the Priest-hood are not tithes, but only a religious assessment. I say this without fear of being refuted, "There is no recorded instance in either the Old or New Testament where anyone other than the Priest-hood or ministry was ever authorized to touch the tithe."

The horrible penalty of touching the tithe is seen in type in the story of the Garden of Eden. God created all the trees of the garden and gave them for the use and enjoyment of man with the exception of one. The Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil God reserved to Himself, warning man not to touch it under the penalty of death. But Adam and Eve refused to heed the word of God and under the prompting of the Serpent "**TOUCHED THE TREE AND DIED**".

I bare to you the inner-most heart of a Pastor with 25 years in the ministry. Why is it that in every city where there is a spirit-filled church preaching the truth, and that church has existed for any length of time, that for every true saint there are at least three or more backsliders? Many of them are lost beyond all hope of being reclaimed. Many are reprobates, scattered to the four winds and embracing every wind of false doctrine. I'll tell you my answer. I very much fear that somewhere and at sometime they touched the anointed of the Lord and died spiritually. Perhaps they became involved in a general rebellion against Pastoral authority. Perhaps they helped eject a man of God from his pulpit. Perhaps on becoming the member of some board or committee they intruded into the Priest's (ministerial) office. Perhaps they laid unfeeling hands on the ministry. Perhaps they sowed the church with the leaven of Laodicea. Perhaps they touched God's "**TITHE**".

The story of Eliashib and Tobiah (Neh. 13) is a strange one and presents some unusual contradictions. The Levites had left the service of the Temple. In their absence Eliashib the High Priest encourages Tobiah, a stranger and a foreigner to move into the tithe chamber. Now here are those strange contradictions: (1) — Why would Eliashib, whose material support depended in great measure upon the faithful tithing of the Levites, seek to work against their interest and welfare? Anything that worked against the Levite, worked against him. (2) — By whose authority did he turn the Tithe Chamber over to a stranger? Did he not realize that he was violating his vows of Priest-hood; that he became derelict in his duty as High Priest in not guarding this sacred chamber? Had he been tried under the laws of our nation he would have been found guilty of treason. Therefore the only verdict that history can render is that Eliashib was guilty of the sin of presump-

tion. His is the story of the usurper who goes beyond God's prescribed boundaries and touches that which is sacred.

Permit me to pass this sober word of warning on to our many fine and conscientious laymen: "**LET NO MAN MAKE A TOBIAH OUT OF YOU**". When your church changes Pastors, and the Levite is gone, **LET NO ELIASHIB ENCOURAGE YOU TO OCCUPY THE TITHE CHAMBER**. The spirit and teachings of Laodicea are strong. Many of our Laymen are tempted at such times to take over the Tithes ad put their incoming Pastor on Salary. I warn you soberly, "Don't be a foolish Uzzah". "Don't be the innocent, ignorant victim of other men's follies". "Don't touch that Ark".

Remember the Church of the Living God is not to be run like a Labor Union, or Lion's Club or the Chamber of Commerce. Our Laymen are constantly exposed to the conversation of men of other religions. They hear them boast of how they ran such and such preacher off; What they did in their last business meeting; What they plan to do in the future. Nothing is sacred to them. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. They have shamelessly invaded even the most sacred precincts of ministerial authority. They are boastful because "**BOASTFULNESS IS ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LAODICEA**". Laymember if you fear God and love your soul do not bring that kind of a spirit into your church. The leaven of Laodicea is deadly and damning and works alarmingly fast. Do not become a curse to your Church, rather be a blessing.

And to those who have ignorantly and innocently moved into the tithe chamber, "**GET OUT AT ONCE**". But the anguished cry comes, "If we return back to the scriptural plan of the Pastor controlling the tithes, it would shake our church. Our whole financial set-up would topple and be broken". Permit me to say not unkindly, "If you had not put the Ark on the Cart in the first place it would not be in any position to be shaken". "But you took the responsibility off the shoulders of the Priest-hood and substituted a "**WORLDLY GIMMICK**" that you borrowed from the Laodiceans around you and now you are in trouble with God. As God's Micaiah we can but shout, "Uzzah . . . don't touch that Ark"; "Let the oxen shake it"; "Let it fall to the ground and be broken". "Then let the ministry whose duty it is, come take it up and bear it according to God's prescribed methods".

To the fearful Laymember, "Don't be afraid of your church suffering". If you adopt God's plan, you can count on His blessings. Rather fear because you refuse to adopt God's plan. When Nehemiah cleansed the Tithe Chamber and threw both Tobiah and his stuff (Doctrines and Practices) out of the Temple (Church) the Levites all returned and God gave them a marvelous revival. All the Israelites brought in their tithes abundantly, and the Levites part became great heaps. You see God began to bless the Israelites

land and cattle and vineyards because they obeyed His word. And here is the ironical part of the whole story. The one who benefitted the most was poor, derelict old Eliashib. We can but bow our heads in awe and say, "Great is the mercies of God".

CHAPTER 8

"SALARIES MUZZLE THE OX"

How highly embarrassed and disappointed would the Apostles and even many of our early Pentecostal Pioneers be, if they were compelled to sit in on certain meetings of today. It is openly inferred that a man has improper motives; is a conniver, a huckster, a cheat, a thief, a deceiver, a publican, a money grabber and a charlatan who accepts the responsibility for the management of the holy tithes of Christian Saints. Why has this unjust censure become so harsh and pronounced in the last few years and that by men who one time believed the tithes should be managed by the ministry?

We have only to examine the histories of the religious Denominations around us to find the answer. Invariably the closer these movements drifted toward Over-Centralization the more it was demanded that the ministry be salaried. Great schemes demand great revenue. Such revenue lies only in the pockets of the laymembers in the form of tithes and offerings. The only person standing between Over-Centralization and this coveted revenue is the Local Pastor or Shepherd. If he gracefully bows out of the picture and permits himself to be by-passed, and looks the other way when the Levites inheritance is pilfered, then he is a jolly good fellow — a regular guy. But let him stand his God-Given ground and sternly say, "Tobiah, you have neither part nor lot in the inheritance of the Lord", and only heaven could help him. God forbid that the day shall ever dawn when our faithful ministers shall jeopardize their reputations and ministries and fellowship because they stand for their God-given rights. That is why we must be alert and guard against Over-Centralization. What is but a trend or a spirit today can become a hard reality tomorrow.

Therefore if in the future Over-Centralization is to have access to the Tithe Chambers of the local churches, the ministry must become a controlled ministry. As we mentioned earlier, both Laodicea and Over-Centralization emphatically agree that if the ministry is ever to be a controlled ministry then it must of necessity be a salaried ministry. As the old proverb goes, "He who pays the fiddler calls the tune".

From the beginning God's Holy Prophets and Priests disdained

salaries. Their faith in God would not permit them to come under a yoke that could make of them hirelings. For example, let us note the story of Jacob. Not only was Jacob a Prophet (one whom God deals with by dreams) but in a sense he was a priest as well. In obtaining the Birth-right from Esau, the privilege of exercising the functions of the Priest-hood in the family became his.

When Jacob first goes to work for Laban, he agrees to a definite and specific wage (salary). In so doing Laban robs him blind. In Genesis 31:41 he angrily accuses Laban of changing his wages ten times.

After 14 years Jacob is fed up working for Laban and decides to leave. He can stand this unjust and unnatural servitude no longer. But Laban entreats him to stay, telling him, "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake". In fact the story proves that Laban would have had nothing had it not been for Jacob. (Many churches who insists on making a salaried hireling out of their Pastor never seem to realize that they would have nothing were it not for their faithful shepherd). Therefore Laban says, "Appoint me thy wages and I will give it". (Genesis 30:28)

But the true spirit of Priest-hood begins to emerge in Jacob. Faith grips his heart. As a member of God's holy Priest-hood he becomes willing to rest his case for material support solely in the hands of God. As one of God's heroes of faith, he takes his place among those immortals of old, who ask only for the provision God has set aside for them.

Genesis 30:32-43 records the strange reply of this equally strange man, "Thou shalt not give me anything". In substance Jacob said, "Let God pay me my wage". "If he wants me to have much, then he will give me much; if he wants me to have little, then he will give me but little". "Let my righteousness answer for me". "Let the yet unborn increase or offsprings of the brown cattle, the ring-straked, speckled and spotted be mine". Verse 43 concludes the story: Accepting God's provision Jacob increased exceedingly.

This clearly demonstrates that the man who has the blessings of God on his ministry and who causes those blessings to be distributed upon those whom he serves, **"HAS THE RIGHT TO SET HIS OWN AMOUNT OF SUPPORT IN THE FEAR OF GOD AND NOT IN THE FEAR OF MAN"**. That heaven solidly supported the choice Jacob made is demonstrated by the bumper crop of new calves — all ring-straked, speckled and spotted.

Jacob brought great blessings on those whom he served, and in the process his faith became more mature. Let us ponder the story of a young itinerant Levite who was content to sell his serv-

ices to the highest bidder and in so doing cursed an entire tribe in Israel and caused them to lose their identity. Hirelings will always cause a people to lose their identity.

The setting is the house of Micah, a man who worships in self-will and installs idols in his house. In the process of time a young Levite from Bethlehem-Judah came by, and Micah strikes a bargain with him. (Judges 17:10) — "Dwell with me," Micah says, "and be unto me a father and a priest and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel and thy victuals". "So the Levite went in".

"WENT INTO WHAT", we ask?

Went into shameless idolatry:

Went into servitude, hired by a layman who had no authority to do so.

Went into a false religion and away from the true.

Went away from the true Altar unto a false Altar.

Went away from the inheritance of the Levite (Tithes) unto the pay of an hireling.

Went away from truth and into error.

Went away from God and into the embrace of Satan.

Consider the horrible portent of Verse 2 — "And the Levite was content to dwell with the man". Here was a Priest utterly void of faith or convictions; A "PROFESSIONAL" in every sense of the word. A far cry from such men of great faith as Jacob who rejected the role of a hireling.

Micah's rejoicing in his young priest was short-lived. One day the Danites came by and Micah lost both Priest and Idols.

The hireling characteristics surfaced in the young man (Judges 18:19). When the Danites invaded Micah's house and stole his idols, the young Priest made only a token protest saying, "What do ye"? The Danites replied, "HOLD THY PEACE, LAY THINE HAND UPON THY MOUTH AND GO WITH US".

When dangerous times come to the church; When truth and righteousness are ruthlessly crushed to the earth; When principle no longer plays the decisive role in the councils of men; When only bold clear-eyed, resolute men with courage and conviction will stand up and save the day; THE HIRELING WILL ALWAYS LAY HIS HAND OVER HIS MOUTH AND GO ALONG WITH THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

The young Levite shamelessly sold his services as an auctioneer would sell a piece of merchandise. When more money, greater

prestige, a broader field of labor, more people to minister to, a higher position, a bigger name was offered him, he never hesitated. Principle, honor, God's wishes or will, mean nothing to the hireling.

As to be expected the story ends tragically. Because of the weakness of a hireling Priest, a Tribe in Israel is led into Idolatry and lost into oblivion. In Revelation when the Names of the twelve Tribes of Israel are called, **THE TRIBE OF DAN IS MISSING.**

I confess there is a mystery that disturbs me deeply: "How can anyone profess to be a student of the Bible and believe tithing is scriptural and then insist that the Pastor be placed on salary, or that anyone apart from the ministry has a Bible right to manage God's holy tithes"?

One individual stated that he could take the story of muzzling the ox in I Cor. 9:9-10 and prove that salaries are scriptural. If he can prove that black is white; or that east is west, or that evil is good, then he can prove that I Cor. 9:9-10 teaches salaries.

Permit me to address every layman, every committee, every board, and every assembly who are sincerely interested in obeying God: "How can you read God's Bible and have access to truth such as is contained in this booklet, and then conscientiously force your faithful Shepherd into assuming the unnatural servitude of a hireling by muzzlelling him with a salary"?

The question is asked, "What about percentages"? We answer, "Who sets the percentage"? "Does the church set the percentage or does the Pastor set the percenage"? "If the minister sets the percentage is he at liberty to change that percentage if his needs so demands"? A percentage set by a church is nothing but a salary with a ceiling but no floor. Scripturally the Pastor has the right to set his own wage in the fear of the Lord and not in the fear of man.

Something else of vital importance: "Who handles the tithe"? "Is it under the complete jurisdiction of the minister"? "Does he have complete and unrestrained freedom here"? Some folk feel that the Pastor should give an itemized account of how he spends the tithes. "Does a man have to give an itemized account of how he spends his inheritance"? "If we are going to demand itemized accounts, then let's be fair; Let's demand itemized accounts from everybody in the church; let's not pick on the poor Preacher".

Much pertinent truth can be gleaned from I Cor. 9:9-10 — "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen"?

"Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt this is written".

Visualize with me a huge pile of unthreshed grain, somewhere back in the hills of old Judea. Round and round the patient, faithful ox walks. He is treading out the grain. A significant fact to remember is that it was through the strength and labor and untiring effort of the ox that the pile is so high. Proverbs 14:4 says, "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean; But much increase is by strength of the ox".

Paul states in I Cor. 9:10 that God was only using the Ox to illustrate his method of support for His New Testament ministry. Permit me to ask the following: "How abundant would the increase of the local assembly be; how large the treasuries; how big and beautiful the church buildings; how many members on the roster roll; how far reaching and effective would the church program be were it not for the vision and strength and wisdom and patience of the faithful minister"? There are laymembers who do not relish this stark truth, but their churches would have very little, in fact there would probably not even be a church were it not for their faithful shepherd.

Church congregations would do well to consider Jacob's words to Laban (Gen. 30:30) — "For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased into a multitude; And the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming; And how shall I provide for mine own house also"?

I have known churches to quibble with a faithful Pastor over a few dollars additiona to an already meager salary, when al that time they were taking in thousands of dollars per month and their treasuries were running over. Ironically before their Pastor came they had very little. Such conditions are so tragically unscriptural. God blesses such a church, not because of such a system, but in spite of it. God did not bless Laban for his sake, but God blessed Laban for Jacob's sake.

The Law of God was very positive regarding an ox treading out the grain. Note the following:

- (1) No muzzle could be placed over his mouth.
- (2) No one was permitted to smite him or scold him or restrain him in any way.
- (3) He ate according to his appetite. It should be quite obvious that he took more than just a bare necessity.
- (4) He set his own wage. If he disregarded the laws of nature and over-ate and became a glutton, he would suffer later; but that was his business. Doubtless many selfish, carnally minded people complained that he would eat too much under such a system. The same complaint is heard today when the Pastor receives the tithes. But their complaint

was against God — not the Ox. The ox was only receiving his God-given dues.

- (5) He was permitted to eat only while he was treading out the corn. (Active in his work).

Why did God use Oxen to illustrate his method of support for His New Testament Ministry? Why did he not use some example where there would have been a precise, stipulated sum or amount? God deliberately chose the Ox treading out the corn to illustrate the fact that he had reserved to the minister (Pastor) the right to set his own wage in the fear of God and not in the fear of man. No one was permitted to set the ox's wage but the Ox; No one is permitted to set the Pastor's wage but the Pastor.

Sincere and well-meaning church laymen, having never been taught this truth, and constantly exposed to the conversations and practices of the Laodiceans around them, contend that they have the right to handle and control God's Tenth or Tithe. We only ask of them to stand up against God's "**PLUMB-LINE**". If they qualify or measure up, then we will concede their right to manage the tithe.

- (1) Do they go off to the gospel wars?
- (2) Do they plant, tend, water and prune the Vineyard?
- (3) Do they guard, feed, and lead the flock?
- (4) Has God made them Over-seer (Bishop) over the flock?
- (5) Do they tread out the Corn (Break the bread of Life)?
- (6) Do they handle the gospel plow?
- (7) Do they thresh God's wheat?
- (8) Do they sow Spiritual things as Paul did?
- (9) Do they minister about Holy Things?
- (10) Do they wait at the Altar (not mourners bench).
- (11) Do they preach the Gospel?

In the light of such searching truth the sincere layman readily sees that he does not qualify or measure up to a single one of these eleven propositions. Therefore the management of God's holy Tithes is strictly off-limits to him.

In concluding this chapter, we would like to answer an objection: There are those who read 1 Tim. 5:17 in the King James Version of the Bible and feel they have a case for a "**SALARIED MINISTRY**". Permit me to quote verse 17 — "**Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor**". They base their arguments on the word "**DOUBLE**". They seem to feel that the word "Double" signifies an exact, specified amount or sum; Double to what someone else may receive. In this they are not rightly dividing the word of truth.

To clarify the matter, permit me to quote I Tim. 5:17 from the Amplified Translation: '(Let the Elders who perform the duties of their office well be considered DOUBLY WORTHY of honor and of adequate financial support".

In other words the faithful Elder (Pastor) is worthy of great honor, and the Saints of his church should not begrudge him adequate financial support.

But to destroy any grounds whatsoever favorable to a Salaried Ministry, Paul in the next verse quotes Deut. 25:4 — "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain".

CHAPTER 9

"SCRIPTURAL TITHING AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY"

Here-to-fore we have written primarily to the laymember and his responsibility to tithe. Not only does God require the laymember to give back the tenth or tithe, he also requires him to place it in the hands of his Pastor or Shepherd. When tithes change hands, the layman's responsibility ceases. The burden of their right and proper use is shifted to the shoulders of the minister. Regardless of what the Pastor does with the tithes, God will not hold the laymember responsible. It then becomes the ministers duty to dispense with the tithe in the light of his own conscience, his God and the leadings and promptings of the Holy Ghost. No sincere minister of the gospel can accept the sacred tithes of Christian saints and not feel this awesome responsibility.

It has always been a mystery to me how that people are willing to entrust the safe-keeping of their precious souls into the hands of a godly Pastor, yet can never bring themselves to entrust him with the tithe. I do not say for a moment there has not been selfishness and greed and avarice shown; God knew that such would be so when he inaugurated the plan, just as he knew there would be oxen who would eat too much and make a glutton of themselves. Still that does not alter His plan. His word still rings true, "MUZZLE NOT THE OX THAT TREADETH OUT THE CORN".

To the faithful Shepherd or Pastor the needs of his church family will always take precedence over any personal need or ambition. This has been abundantly demonstrated by men who have sacrificed the best years of their lives in building up their church congregations. It has been a common thing for such men to take money out their own pockets and even sacrifice physical necessities for themselves and their families to see that the doors of the

church were kept open, the lights burning, the bills paid, the needs of impoverished families met and improvements made. Few laymen will ever fully understand the financial drain that is imposed on a Pastor. A good shepherd's life is spent in seeking to better the welfare of his flock. A good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep.

Let it be understood that in all this discourse on tithing, nowhere does this author condone selfishness or greed or the spirit of avarice. I stand unequivocally on the doctrine that God ordained the tithe to be paid to the Priest-hood and that no one but the Priest-hood has a scriptural right to handle or control the tithe. "**YET WITH EVERY LIBERTY THERE IS A CORRESPONDING RESPONSIBILITY**". Ministers are stewards of the manifold blessings of God, both materially and spiritually. They are stewards of their lives, their time, their talents, their strength and abilities and of the material wealth or gain that God blesses them with. As stewards they are to husband these blessings and use them wisely as the Holy Ghost directs and always with His glory in mind. "**WE ARE NOT OUR OWN, WE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE**".

As one prominent Texas Pastor stated to the author, "I believe the Pastor alone has a Bible right to handle the tithe; yet if God gave me a million dollars a year, I would take about what I am taking now, which is an adequate living, and turn the rest back into the work of God".

I am personally acquainted with many men who are deeply convinced by the scriptures that the Pastor alone should control the tithe; without exception I do not know of a single one who does not endorse and practice exactly what this Texas Pastor stated. Are their churches suffering? Are they preaching to small, struggling congregations in match-box church houses, impoverished because of a greedy Pastor? This is not the case at all. Invariably they are ministering to growing, spiritual congregations. God is blessing and new people are constantly being added. Some of the most beautiful and spacious church buildings in Pentecost house congregations that from the very birth of their church, scrupulously practiced paying their tithes to their Pastor. A church family never suffers when they obey God's plan. They suffer when they fail to do so.

A fine, humble Pastor of my acquaintance was severely criticized because he insisted on his Bible rights of controlling the tithes of his church. Encouraged by outside sources, a rebellious element hurled many hard and unjust accusations at him, and almost succeeded in breaking his health and his spirit. Yet not one time did they ever mention the home missionary churches he helped establish, or the young evangelists to which he drained his own pockets to keep on the field, or the many generous contribu-

tions he made to the work of God in general. Neither did they acknowledge that their church was bigger and more spiritual and had enjoyed greater revivals than it ever had in all its history. Let the "LAODICEAN SPIRIT" seize the minds of lukewarm church members, and let that spirit be fanned by outside influences, and they seem to lose all sense of direction. The author happened to know that when this good man was finally forced to leave this church, he left almost penniless. Had all his bills come due at one time, he would have been compelled to borrow money to move his household goods out of the city. God does not forget such assassinations. In due time His sword will fall.

There are those who constantly harp on the broken record theme that the Pastor receiving the tithes will cause trouble in the local church. This is like Ahab accusing Elijah of causing trouble in Israel. They are the ones who are triggering the trouble and discord and division because they refuse to cease championing "**THE LAODICEAN TAKE-OVER OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES**". Sincere struggling Pastors who did not deserve such treatment have had the very ground cut from under their feet by such men. I cannot find it in the Bible, or in any church manual, neither in our Pentecostal Traditions where any man has ever been given the right or authority to stand before bodies of church laymen and ridicule Pastors as money-grabbers because they teach that only the Priest-hood has a Bible right to control the tithes.

I challenge them to answer me: Was Charles F. Parham, father of 20th century Pentecost a charlatan and a money grabber because he taught early Pentecostal Saints to pay their tithes to their Pastor? What of that innumerable host of ministers and pastors and great organizational leaders who have shaped the destiny of our movement and built many of our largest congregations and most beautiful churches, **WERE THEY CHARLATANS AND MONEY-GRABBERS?** Almost without exception they championed — (1) A sovereign local church under the headship of its Bishop or Pastor. (2) That the saints of the church, to obey the scriptures, should pay their tithes to their Pastor. I am not introducing a new doctrine. Pentecost has been rocked in this cradle. Men who teach against this are the ones who are guilty of introducing a new Doctrine in Pentecost. They are seeking to sow this movement with the leaven of "**NICAOLAITANISM AND LAODICEA**".

They know that many of the dark and dismal pictures they paint are only **STRAW-MEN**; stuffed dummies constructed and erected solely that they might don their shining armor and demolish them in the best Don Quixote fashion. That way they become current heroes before unsuspecting bodies of church laymen.

As the wife of a prominent Pastor stated, "Such sermons do not injure my husband; he is strong enough to take it. I'll tell you who it hurts. It hurts the struggling Pastors of the small churches who are finding it difficult to make ends meet financially. Striving to live on an already meagre income, they are now going to go home and find that dissension and discord has been sown in their local church over them receiving even that little amount".

Pastors are responsible to God to teach His true tithing plan to their church congregations. Instead of robbing or wronging the church member by receiving their tithes, a Pastor robs them when he refuses to receive their tithes. He cheats them out of a blessing; He hinders their growth and development; His actions can retard their faith ever fully developing; He cheats them out of material and financial blessings. Even though a minister is financially independent and does not need the support of the church, for the people's sake and for the future development and growth of their local church he is obligated, yea commanded, "To take tithes from the people". He is not obligated to keep them. If he so desires he can return the full amount back into the work of God.

For example, few were the times in Paul's life that he ever found it necessary to apologize to anyone. Yet he apologized to the Church at Corinth and acknowledged that he had wronged them in not teaching God's financial plan to them. He says, "**For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong**". 2 Cor. 12:13. Because certain ones challenged his Apostleship and his right to receive financial support from the church, he refrained from instructing them about God's financial plan and worked with his own hands to support himself while he ministered to them. Now he acknowledges that he had wronged them in doing so.

Another responsibility that we are compelled to mention is the Pastor's responsibility to the Evangelist, the Bible Teacher and other visiting ministers active in the work of God. Surely they are members of the Priest-hood. Therefore the Law of Tithing, to work as God intended for it to work, is an endless chain whose links are never to be broken. Out of every dime of tithes a Pastor receives, he in turn should pay tithes. I would feel very much condemned to receive tithes from the precious saints of the church of which I am the Pastor, if I did not in turn scrupulously pay tithes.

As we have mentioned earlier, Tithes and the Priest-hood are inseparable. Separate tithes from the Priest-hood and they are no longer tithes — only a religious assessment. Therefore tithes should be kept in the Priest-hood. We deplore the lack of qualified Evangelists active in our ranks today. Perhaps there is a reason. Perhaps the tithes are not being kept in the Priest-hood and the Evangelists have been forced off the field. No Evangelist or Bible Teacher will ever go lacking if God's true financial plan is carried out, and

the Pastor will treat his brother minister with due concern. In the days of Nehemiah when the Israelites began to bring their tithes back to their proper place, the Levites returned and Israel experienced revival. Perhaps if all the tithes were returned to their proper place within the Priest-hood, the Evangelists would return and God would send us greater revivals. We commit a terrible error when we presume to improve on God's methods and seek to change things around. Always in the end something vital to the spiritual welfare of the church comes up lacking and the work of God suffers.

If contending for the right to control the tithe was only a matter of dollars and cents and material advantages, in the light of the supreme sacrifice of our Lord, a preacher would only cheapen himself to even mention the subject. But scriptural tithing embodies much more than mere earthly gain for a preacher. There are divine principles involved that cannot be sacrificed. The principle of ministerial freedom; of liberty under God to be God's mouthpiece and God's man. The principle of the unmuzzled ministry, both literally and figuratively; Of the unshackled, unsullied, unsoled, and unsalaried ministry that Satan fears next to Almighty God Himself. The Principle of whether a preacher shall be God's free man or an ecclesiastical hireling. This is the Divine inheritance of the Pentecostal ministry.

Though the spirits of Nicaolaitanism and Laodicea have only reached perhaps the stages of early adolescence in our ranks, there is an ardent courtship transpiring between the two. Let them reach full maturity and there will inevitably be a marriage. An **AHAB-JEZEBEL** wedding, and only God can help poor Naboth (The Pentecostal Ministry).

When Ahab first began to covet Naboth's inheritance, he tried to bargain him out of it. But Naboth indignantly replied, "**The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my father's unto thee.**" (1 Kings 21:3)

Though Naboth felt keenly the responsibility of preserving the inheritance of his fathers, he did not fully understand the nature of the forces opposing him. Ahab (Nicaolaitanism) within himself was bad enough, but let Jezebel (Laodicea) join forces with Ahab and Naboth's doom was sealed. Thus a good man was destroyed all because he refused to surrender his God-given convictions. Naboth felt a personal responsibility. We are filled with mis-givings when we look about us and see so many good men who have succumbed to the spirit that **NOTHING IS REALLY WORTH FIGHTING FOR.**

"CONCLUSION"

When the Feudal System was the ruling force during the middle ages, the land was almost totally owned by a few great land Barons. At this time individual liberty reached perhaps its lowest ebb in all human history. The "SERF" or peasant not only tilled the ground as virtual slaves — they were bound to the land. They were not permitted to leave their particular section of land. If the land was sold or traded, the Serf went with the land as part of the deal, the same as the buildings, the fences and the water-rights. In other words the "**SERFS WERE FIXED CHATTEL**" only a step above the ox, the horse and the donkey. It was during this time that the word "**SERFDOM**" was coined.

Let the Twin evils of "**NICAOLAITANISM**" and "**LAODICEA**" join hands, and the ministry is automatically forced into "**ECCLESISASTICAL SERFDOM**". As we have mentioned before, given time, and a religious denomination will develop a system whereby the ministry is provided complete earthly security from the Seminary to the Grave. This binds the ministry completely and irrevocably just as it was meant to do, to their particular Ecclesiastical System. Thus the "**MINISTRY BECOMES FIXED CHATTEL**".

But God never ordained Spiritual Serfdom for His Priest-hood. That is why he made special provisions in the Old Testament and set the Priest-hood apart for Himself, and gave them the "**TITHES**" for an inheritance instead of a Land-Grant or State in Israel.

God's Priest-hood or Ministry is ordained to work directly under the Sovereignty of the Holy Ghost. The individual minister is called by the Holy Ghost; He is equipped by the Holy Ghost; He is directed and led by the Holy Ghost; He is sent forth by the Holy Ghost; He is placed in and taken out of office by the discretion of the Holy Ghost; And by God's "**TITHE**" or "**TENTH**" he is supported by the Holy Ghost. This is a Divine prerogative that God reserved to Himself. He is jealous over his ministry. He brooks no outside interference. He recognizes no intermediary or go-between. Thus the reason why both the Laodicean and Nicaolaitane systems are hateful in His eyes.

Our sole purpose in presenting this booklet is in defence of the preacher; of his authority, his power, his prerogatives and his rights and privileges under God. The title of this work is "**Scrip-tural Tithing and New Testament Church Government**", but its central theme is "**MINISTERIAL AUTHORITY**". Therefore in the way of a conclusion we would like to pin-point a number of things that have a direct bearing not only on the question of the minister's authority and freedom, but upon the future welfare of the Pentecostal Movement as well.

(I) We should reaffirm the doctrine that the local church

is sovereign with the Pastor the Bishop over his own flock.

(2) Let us reaffirm the doctrine that "**TITHES**" and the Priest-hood are inseparable. That God ordained the Plan of Tithing to support his ministry and to keep them free and unfettered.

(3) We must guard with all our strength those sacred and hallowed treasures of our Pentecostal Heritage, Namely — Our Pentecostal Message; Bible Holiness; The signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Spirit; And last but not least the God-given right and freedom of our People and our churches and especially our ministers to worship and work and develop and preach according to God's Divine will without fear or restraint or intimidation.

(4) We must preserve the concept of due ministerial courtesy; To respect a man's pulpit even though we may differ with him on certain lines of teachings.

(5) We must always look upon religious Organization in its true perspective. That religious organization is the servant of the collective Ministry, and not the collective ministry the servant of religious organization; That God ordained an equal Brother-hood and not a religious Hierarchy among the ministry.

(6) We should faithfully warn our local churches that the Doctrine of Laodicea is a contagious thing and can damn a church or a movement. It has fast taken over the secular churches of the world and is making inroads into our own ranks. God never ordained that the Lay-member take over the machinery of the local church and shunt the Pastor aside. This is presumption and can bring an assembly nothing but the curse of God. When the Lay-members took over the church of Laodicea, Christ moved out. The same will happen today.

(7) We should recognize that ours is a situation where one organization holds almost a virtual monopoly on the Jesus Name Movement. This can be a great blessing, especially when a people is determined to walk humbly and sincerely before God and preserve the spirit of unity and brotherly love. But on the other hand it can become a curse. It can cause us to become bigoted and proud and arrogant; thus pulling our skirts tightly about us and refusing to recognize others of like precious faith because they follow not with us. In the secular world the usual trend of a monopoly is toward tyranny and the ruthless crushing of all who do not see eye to eye with current policy. That is why the United States Government has seen fit to pass certain anti-trust laws, and Civil-rights laws to protect the minority. Crisp ringing commands and the issuance of military like orders and ultimatums must never be permitted to replace entreaty, persuasion and patient forbearance.

(8) Names of men, their reputations and their characters

should not be carelessly tossed about in a critical derogatory manner and no effort made for the man in question to be called in to face his accusers or to hear his side of the story. Our brethren rightfully feel that if a man is guilty of wrong doing, he should be openly charged and tried in a fair and impartial manner. Secret inquisitions of men's characters, their names and reputations should not be tolerated in a Christian Fellowship.

(9) We should voice our opposition to the devious ways of politics. We should be unalterably opposed to favoritism and partiality becoming hallmarks of our fellowship. Neither should pastorates, positions and prestige be handed out as spoils of office. We should at all times be consistent. **POLITICS SHOULD NOT BE DAMNED IN THE LOBBY, BUT OPENLY AND SHAMELESSLY SANCTIONED AND PRACTICED ON THE PLATFORM.** If politics is a sin and a shame in the lobby then politics is a sin and a shame on the platform **WHETHER IT BE PRACTICED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.**

(10) We should be unequivocally opposed to outside invasion of the local church at any time; more especially when trouble and disunity arises.

We must repudiate the theory that "**PREACHERS ARE EX-PENDABLE BUT CHURCHES ARE NOT**". Save the church even if the preacher has to be sacrificed.

I do not hold for a moment that preachers cannot be wrong. Neither am I advocating that which is brutal or cruel or dictatorial or contrary to God's divine order or will. We are shepherds and not Lord's over God's heritage. I am saying though that the "**SPIRIT OF LAODICEA**" or rule by the lay-member can and has throttled many of our churches, leaving the Pastor little more than a figure-head. God never intended that committees and boards should rule the Pastor of the church. Neither do they have a Divine right to dictate the Pastor's actions. Rebellious cliques with a rule or ruin spirit can become entrenched in strategic places and totally neutralize a Pastor's authority and effectiveness to the extent that he cannot exercise discipline over the flock or even be his own man. Let ecclesiastical authorities take sides with such a rebellious element and it only strengthens their hand in either bending the next Pastor to their will or else breaking him altogether.

When it is truly determined that such an unscriptural, unholy system exists in the local church, it must be uprooted before God's power and blessings will again rest on that congregation in its fulness. Like the foundations of a decayed building, rotted timbers must be removed and replaced. The pruning knife must be sharp and of necessity cut deep. It is here that the beleagured Pastor needs sympathy and prayer and encouragement and support.

Many a clean, conscientious man of God has been butchered by such a system. Broken in spirit and sometimes broken in health, he stumbles blindly away with his stricken family. Think not that almighty God does not mark everyone of these assassinations. His word still rings true, "**TOUCH NOT MINE ANOINTED**".

(11) The seeking of revenge or retaliation should be repudiated as something beneath the dignity of spirit filled ministers of the gospel. That is why no investigation, case or trial, not even morals cases, should be abruptly or brutally handled. Let someone be robbed or assaulted or killed on a lonely section of a dark road and others will be fearful of passing that way. Hence the carefulness that should be exercised in seeing that justice and mercy and forbearance and kindness always prevail. Rather let a dozen guilty persons go scot free than for one innocent man to suffer for something he did not do.

Let threats of revenge or retaliation thunder from high places; Let the mailed fist of tyranny be used to crush or kill or destroy even one time and sensations of fear and alarm vibrate throughout our entire fellowship. This certainly does not make for peace or harmony.

(12) The causes of fear should be sought out and eliminated from our ranks. I am not referring to fears generated from without, but fears generated from within. None of our preachers should ever feel that his ministry or his church or his fellowship or his name, reputation or prestige stands in jeopardy because he —

Voted the way he did;

Frankly and openly expressed an honest opinion;

Took an unpopular side of an issue;

Boldly and freely preached his convictions, especially when the Bible, the manual and Pentecostal Traditions all gave him that right.

Because he permitted the Holy Ghost to use him in an unusual way.

Permits the gifts of the spirit to operate in his life and church.

Insists on maintaining his prerogative that the Pastor is the Bishop over his own flock.

Does not endorse every scheme, especially when such schemes are subtilly framed to wring more money from an already over-drained local church.

Because he feels that he does not have to lick boots, or polish apples, or climb aboard band-wagons to render faithful and dedicated service to this movement.

We would be less than intelligent, perceptive men if we refused to recognize the fact that there is a decided and definite fear

pervading our fellowship. No doubt but that this fear is more pronounced in certain areas than in others, still it is relatively widespread. Ministers fear for their churches; They are fearful of the dissension that outside forces can trigger in the local church. Yet they are afraid to speak up lest their names, their reputations and even their ministries be injured. This is not a healthy thing. It certainly does not make for peace or harmony or unity. Unless the causes are sought out and eliminated it can but lead to disaster.

There is a large segment of our ministers who are fearful that the soft-pedal is being used relative to certain vital aspects of our message. They cringe with apprehension when prominent men stand up and preach a negative "**I BELIEVE BUT**" type of message and deliberately heap ridicule and sarcasm on holiness and spirituality, shouting, the gifts of the spirit and even prayer and fasting.

They are seized with apprehension when much publicized sessions and services are dry and unspiritual. They closely and intently watch for the anointing upon those who stand upon the great podiums and when it fails to be manifested they are very much dismayed.

They are fearful that deliberate effort is made to freeze down the man who stands up and permits God to use him to speak out boldly and clearly and positively on vital issues. They are apprehensive lest the old-fashioned, challenging, clear-cut, anointed, fearless, straight-from-the-shoulder type of preaching that has characterized the Pentecostal Movement from its beginning is finding less and less favor.

Because they hunger and thirst for that clear note and that certain sound to ring forth, they are fearful lest programs and politics and promotions and dry business sessions completely squeeze out prayer and shouting and Bible study and the manifestations of God's spirit in our great gatherings.

"Ensigns for signs" (Psalms 74:14) **"But where are our signs?"** Flip-charts and placards, brochures and visual aids we see in abundance, **"BUT WHERE ARE THE MIRACLES AND HEALINGS AND PROPHECIES AND DISCERNMENTS OF SPIRITS AND THE MIGHTY PREACHING OF THE WORD WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING?"** These are the fears and questions that sincere brethren are voicing everywhere. What shall we answer them?

(13) **"THE POWER TO TAX IS THE POWER TO DESTROY".** Concern and alarm is being voiced over this matter. A flat sum or ceiling should be set on how much a minister can be taxed before he forfeits his fellowship. That ceiling should be the minimum amount.

(14) We must reject the theory of a **"FACELESS MINISTRY"**.

The drift toward a unified Brother-hood must not rob the minister of his individuality. Men without faces, stereotyped and poured into a dismal mediocre mold, parrotting party-line phrases and worn out cliches and going through prescribed motions can no more produce revival or reform than can a blacksmith shop produce an Archangel. Diversity of personality and approach and methods and gifts and abilities and ministries lend color and strength and variety to the New Testament Church. We need a unified Brother-hood but not an homogenized Brother-hood. Let's leave the process of homogenization to the Borden people.

(15) Politics presents a great danger to the Twentieth Century Pentecostal Movement. Many are the evils that ride the coat-tails of politics. How it must grieve the heart of God to see the selfishness, the intrigue, the base carnal ambition, the character assassination and the unchristian positions to which men will stoop to gain an office. I do not say this as an indictment against any man. Overwhelmingly our officials are fine, honorable men. Yet even good men at times can be caught up in a spirit of madness.

From a thorough study of the New Testament Church, the nearest thing that I can find that resembles a democratic election in any way is found in Acts 1:21-26. This is where the Apostles and early disciples met to choose a successor for Judas who betrayed Jesus. After Peter had set forth the qualifications, they appointed two men, Joseph and Matthias. After sincerely praying for God to make His choice known, they cast lots and Matthias was chosen.

If our movement would return to this Apostolic Method of choosing officials, politics with all its accompanying evils could be almost completely eliminated. The procedure is as simple as this: Let the conference cast a nominating ballot and bring forth either three or five names of men who received the highest number of votes. Then instead of a run-off ballot, cast lots between these men to determine the one to fill the position.

Impractical you say? Visionary? God did not think so and neither did the Apostles. I know of a number of prominent ministers who have given this procedure serious consideration. They feel that this may be the only solution to a myriad of problems facing our movement today.

Now just what reforms would such a method of choosing officers work? What would be the advantages attained?

(A) It would be more nearly scriptural than any other method a Religious Movement could adopt. A people will never go astray as long as they stay with the scriptures.

(B) It would tend to take the choosing of Organizational officials out of the hands of men and place it in the hands of God, thus recognizing the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost. No doubt this would be the thing that carnally minded men would fear most.

(C) It would do much to eliminate the evils of politics. What man would take the trouble to campaign or button-hole voters directly or indirectly under such a set-up?

(D) It would tend to break up Power Cliques and Pressure Groups, thus destroying any developing trends toward Religious Hierarchy. It is the Power Cliques and Pressure Groups who see visions of a Religious Hierarchy. As Lord Acton stated many years ago, "**POWER CORRUPTS AND TOTAL POWER CORRUPTS TOTALLY**".

(E) It would eliminate would-be Political Bosses from perpetuating themselves in office. It would eliminate the Smoke-filled-room method of hand-picking candidates. The Political Bosses and Power Cliques would not be able to hand-pick their successors thus perpetuating their power.

(F) It would tend greatly to unify the Pentecostal Movement. Minority groups would feel that they were receiving a fair deal, thus eliminating much complaint.

(G) It would restore authority back to the collective ministry by placing more emphasis on the individual minister and the local church. Because he had no assurance that he would be chosen to another term in office an official would not be as likely to lose sight of the problems and fears and anxieties of a Pastor as he would otherwise.

(H) In the selection of officers, ministers could truly and sincerely stand and pray for God's will to be done with unbiased and unprejudiced mind, something that many have found rather difficult to do in the past.

(I) It would tend to make the Pentecostal Movement more spiritual; More dependent on God; More conscious of the need of seeking His will, His favor and His presence in our midst.

(J) It would tend to give ministers more respect for each other. Removing a bone of contention they would tend to love one another more. Of a certainty it would give the ministers more respect for the elected official.

(K) Last but not least, it could easily be the salvation of many fine, honorable, humble men who find themselves chosen to serve as an organizational official. Thoughtful, discerning men have long recognized the fact that office has chewed up many good men, spitting them out broken, bitter and disillusioned. Office can and has destroyed many a man. Perhaps they lost sight of the cardinal fact that Organizational Office is by God's permission and not by His commandment. Therefore not understanding the scriptural limitations of their authority they overstepped and became guilty in God's sight of presumption. Perhaps they became so deep-

ly involved politically in trying to perpetuate their office that they lost out spiritually. This method would tend greatly to eliminate the sting and reproach of being voted out of office.

(16) The ministry must guard against government by "DECREE" and not by legislation; Of ever lengthening board and committee meetings, but ever shorter business sessions on conference floors. Conferences can easily degenerate into becoming nothing more than rubber stamps, called into session to ratify acts and plans and proposed legislation hashed out beforehand in committee meetings.

Some of the surest signs that a movement is drifting steadily toward Over-Centralization are —

- (1) The gradual trimming of the amount of time permitted for open business sessions.
- (2) The ever increasing number of offices filled by appointment and not by election.
- (3) The increasing number of decrees handed down upon which the general body never had an opportunity to act.

(17) We must guard our Camp Meetings and Conferences or any other meeting where great bodies of laymembers gather, lest they become giant sounding boards for propaganda. It is very easy here for the Pastors to be short-circuited or by-passed altogether.

"CAMP MEETINGS MUST NOT BECOME SUPER-CHURCHES, PRESIDED OVER BY SUPER-PASTORS". We have many great and good men in our ranks but none of them scripturally qualify for the office of "SUPER-PASTOR". Babies belong in the hands of their mothers; Sheep belong in the hands of their shepherds; Church members belong in the hands of their Pastors. Anything other than this is unscriptural.

(18) Politicians are suddenly finding the Bride of Christ extremely desirable. I speak with reference to governors and senators and congressmen and assorted mayors and city-councilmen. This ardent desire on their part is not motivated by any love for her message, or admiration for the beauty of her holiness or desire for the spirit of her Bridegroom. It is motivated by the practical down-to-earth fact that Pentecost is beginning to wield power at the polls. Pentecost has become an adolescent giant, challenging the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians and other old-line protestant groups in numbers. Numbers mean votes and politicians must have votes to stay in business.

I have more confidence in the spiritual maturity of the Pente-

costal Movement than to believe that her's will ever be the conduct of the aging spinster who falls heir to a sizeable fortune and suddenly finds the most eligible bachelor in town paying her court. Flattered and flustered and all a-twitter, the poor thing becomes as giddy as a giggling high school sophomore out in her first spike heels.

Jesus said that where the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together. If the Pentecostal Movement is minded to make a carcass out of herself she will never lack for a swarm of these creatures. But mark me down as one of those poor, fanatic, radical, narrow-minded individuals who still is simple enough to believe that the Platform is a sacred place, and the pulpit the Hallowed-by-God Tower of the flock where only the watchmen have a right to stand.

What do these people have that is so vital to our welfare? Is it appropriate for the Bride of Christ to play footsy with them? Is it becoming for her to accept the gifts of strange lovers? What must the Bride-groom think when His espoused Bride begins to accept the favor and flattery and attention and courtship of the world?

The Roman Emperors after the closing of the Apostolic era, suddenly awoke and found that the early New Testament Church had come of age. They also found a church that had drifted far from her original moorings. Constantine the Great, clever politician that he was, employed the age old tactic, "**THAT IF YOU CAN'T WHIP THEM, JOIN THEM**". This he did in name only. Then began the courtship that ended in Spiritual Adultery. They erected huge and elaborate cathedrals for the church. They lavished lucrative salaries and rich vestments on the Bishops and built them ornate thrones on which to sit. Each lavished on the other titles and honors and gifts and praise.

Therefore at the dawning of the Pergamos era, the original spotless Bride had become a sullied harlot known as the **TOLERANT CHURCH**. The very name "**PERGAMOS**" describes her condition. "**PERGAMOS**" means "**MARRIAGE**" and "**ELEVATION**". Thus what began as but a mild flirtation led to spiritual adultery. The Bride divorced the Bride-groom, married the world and was elevated to places of power and earthly glory.

God forbid that history should repeat itself.

(E N D)

"GOD GIVE US MEN"

God, give us men; A time like this demands strong minds,
great hearts, true faith and ready hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill; Men whom the spoils
of office cannot buy;

Men who possess opinions and a will;

Men who have honor; Men who will not lie;

Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous
flatteries without winking;

Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog in
public duty and in private thinking;

For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds, their large

professions and their little deeds,

Mingle in selfish strife, lo—— Freedom weeps, wrong rules the
land and waiting justice sleeps.

By —

Josiah Gilbert Holland